



CUBA:

HOPE OF A HEMISPHERE

by Joseph North



An analysis of the background and social roots of the July 26th Movement and the government of Dr. Fidel Castro, together with a first-hand account of the recent events in Cuba.

FROM THE AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

"... I wrote most of these pages abroad, on a speaking and writing trip to Europe that began when I covered the ill-fated Summit meeting that never got off the ground last May. In a way the delay in completing this, occasioned by my European trip, was a good thing. I discovered, at first hand, how the new Cuba has captured the world's imagination. I talked to many of the 3,000 world correspondents gathered last May at the Palais Chaillot and I saw how Cuba, today, has the quality Republican Spain had in the thirties when the cause of Madrid was the cause of all progressive mankind. No matter to whom you talked, the Indian, the Australian, the African, all eyes were on Cuba.

Regardless of political persuasion, they were impressed, or inspired, by Cuba's noble and successful fight to oust a tyrant who had behind him the might of the biggest power in the West—the U.S. government. Second, Cuba's remarkable progress in improving the lot of its people during the brief two years of its existence has wrung the admiration of all continents.

How they were able to do that is the burden of this work. Everywhere I went they plied me with questions once they heard I had been to Cuba. I was in Cuba twice, the two journeys were a year apart and I could register the change at first hand. People eagerly sought facts about that."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Born in 1904, the son of an immigrant blacksmith, Joseph North ran bobbins in a textile mill at twelve. From the age of thirteen he worked summers in the shipyards of his home town listening to the talk of riveters when the hammering died down. Eager for an education, he got his Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Pennsylvania near his home town. After a few years in daily journalism on newspapers, he began to write for the labor press in the twenties. In 1934 he was a founder of the weekly *New Masses* and served as editor during most of the fifteen years of its existence. During this time North became noted for his memorable reportage which included the big strikes of the thirties, the march of the jobless for unemployment insurance, the battles for Negro rights in the South. Covering the Spanish war, he was the only American correspondent to cross the Ebro with the International Brigades. On his return he traveled frequently throughout the land as well as in Mexico and Cuba. He was in Europe as war correspondent during World War II, and many remember his dispatch from the concentration camp of Dachau on V-E day.

North wrote a great book—NO MEN ARE STRANGERS—about these years. He is now at work on another book about the postwar years.

Cuba: Hope of a Hemisphere

by Joseph North

Author of *No Men Are Strangers*,
Robert Minor — Artist and Crusader, etc.



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FOREWORD — AN ALERT

These pages are being finished as my radio announces that some 1500 American marines have landed in Guantanamo, Cuba, put there by amphibian craft of the United States Navy. They are on war maneuvers in Caribbean waters.

The radio also describes the speech of Premier Fidel Castro urging his people to remain calm when and if the shooting invasion materializes that they momentarily expect. The State Department avowed that the Marines came only to play baseball on the twenty-seven ball fields of the naval base, making it sound as though they were stopping off at Coney Island for a week-end of fun.

But Latin America took all this in dead earnest. It was an obvious show of strength, a browbeating gesture of the State Department. The world was alarmed. How gruesome the humor of the Pentagon and Foggy Bottom!

Few knowledgeable people in the world today—sad to admit—take the word of our government. The U-2 episode can't be forgotten or fobbed off with the "they-got-spies, we-got-spies" argument. A potential nuclear bomb carrier is no Mata Hari, as one commentator said. The former can touch off, at one moment, the third world war with all its horrors. And the world has not forgotten the tragic-comedy of disavowals at the outset of the U-2 episode. Or the final insistence upon rejecting all time-honored traditions and international law about honoring another country's sovereignty.

Yesterday it was Guatemala—the overthrow of the liberal Arbenz government in 1954. This came up big

in the news as these pages are being finished. Both presidential candidates made alarming statements that called for armed intervention one way or another against Cuba. The primary difference was that one wanted it loud and public and the other thought a more furtive way was preferable—the Guatemala treatment.

James Reston spoke up on this in one of the most astounding confessionals in the history of modern journalism. He told the *New York Times* public, in October of 1960, what Marxists contended when the Guatemala tragedy was taking place in 1954. The Marxists said then that the State Department had intervened on behalf of United Fruit, and with the aid of such sinister experts as the Central Intelligence Agency, had engineered the overthrow. Our Government had interfered outrageously in the domestic affairs of a neighboring land despite all sacred agreements never to do so.

Reston said that the “joke of the week”—(some joke)—in every Latin American agency was Nixon’s statement in his fourth television debate: “We quarantined Mr. Arbenz,” Nixon said, “and the result was the Guatemalan people themselves eventually rose and threw him out.” Reston said that “every official who knows anything about the fall of the Arbenz government knows that the United States government, through the Central Intelligence Agency, worked actively with, and financed, and made available the arms with which the anti-Arbenz forces finally ‘threw him out.’”

The fact is that the Eisenhower administration, and Nixon personally, have “taken credit” for overthrowing Arbenz. They called his administration “pro-Communist,” rigged up claims that he was “receiving arms from Czechoslovakia,” and they mounted the invasion. Why? Because Arbenz tried to initiate some minimal agrarian reforms about as radical as FDR’s New Deal measures. These reforms might have reduced the fabulous profits of United Fruit fractionally. So they did

yesterday in Guatemala what Kennedy, Nixon, the State Department, the Pentagon, are trying to do in Cuba today.

This was written to try to alert Americans, and others, to this threat. I wrote most of these pages abroad, on a speaking and writing trip to Europe that began when I covered the ill-fated Summit meeting that never got off the ground last May. In a way the delay in completing this, occasioned by my European trip, was a good thing. I discovered, at first hand, how the new Cuba has captured the world's imagination. I talked to many of the 3,000 world correspondents gathered last May at the Palais Chaillot and I saw how Cuba, today, has the quality Republican Spain had in the thirties when the cause of Madrid was the cause of all progressive mankind. No matter to whom you talked, the Indian, the Australian, the African, all eyes were on Cuba.

Regardless of political persuasion, they were impressed, or inspired, by Cuba's noble and successful fight to oust a tyrant who had behind him the might of the biggest power in the West—the U.S. government. Second, Cuba's remarkable progress in improving the lot of its people during the brief two years of its existence has wrung the admiration of all continents.

How they were able to do that is the burden of this work. Everywhere I went they plied me with questions once they heard I had been to Cuba. I was in Cuba twice, the two journeys were a year apart and I could register the change at first hand. People eagerly sought facts about that.

But everywhere in the world I found the same great fear: that the United States government, in its desperate disregard of world opinion, might try military intervention, or its equivalent, the overthrow of the new Cuba.

These pages set as their purpose the need to prevent any open armed or concealed assault on this gallant

people. The danger is real and ever-present and imminent.

On my return from Cuba in February of 1959 I wrote a pamphlet which was translated into Spanish and got wide distribution, here and abroad. After my second trip I was summoned by subpoena to appear before the Senate Internal Security Committee and for over three hours subjected to outrageous treatment, asked provocative questions why I, a writer, editor, and correspondent for some thirty years, had gone to Cuba. In true inquisitorial fashion, the senator with the gavel tried to sabotage the writer's right to freedom of opinion, and of press. He read to me from my pamphlet and engaged me in polemics about its contents. This interference in my professional duties is obviously an effort to intimidate others from going to Cuba, as I have often urged, simply to see for themselves. The hearings were part of the scheme to isolate the new Cuba from world concern and overthrow it as Guatemala was overthrown. But the time has passed for the easy success of such stratagems. Too many in too many parts of the world are concerned: let those who plot to overthrow Cuba keep that in mind. They may well suffer such a defeat as they never dreamed possible.

All this, obviously, is no way of steering into the future. As the common phrase goes, "there is no percentage in it" for anybody, and least of all, for those steering our nation. They cannot win by force of arms—Algeria should be an irrefutable example for the whole western world—nor can they win by the bludgeon of economic blockade. 1961 is like no other year in history: the majority of mankind is not only in great sympathy with Cuba, it commands a vantage point to support Cuba in practice. And to such an extent that it could well be suicidal for the mighty of the USA to ignore that support.

It will avail the powerful in Wall Street and the Pentagon, the press lords and others, nothing, or next to nothing.

ing, to label what is happening south of the Rio as "Communist!"

The cry directed at Fidel Castro and the revolution he led, boomeranged—or rather, he tossed it back with the reply that "anti-Communism is counter-revolutionary"—as is, he added, every anti,—anti-Catholicism, anti-Protestantism, anti-whatnot, that is divisive. The fact is, as abundant evidence proves, the Communists of Cuba number themselves among the most loyal, the most selfless, of all backing Castro, of all favoring a free Cuba that will prosper in amity with all the world—yes, and with us, of the U.S.A. included. Hence, even the expedience of sheer survival requires that our governmental authorities find new approaches, explore new avenues, that will lead to the end of tensions between our nations, and to bonds of trade and friendship. That is the hope, the purpose, of this writing.

JOSEPH NORTH

I. MEET THE VICTORIOUS REBELS

I DO NOT herein address myself to Senator the Inquisitor. Although he sat high on the dais and asked me the loaded questions, these answers are for the eyes of all in the world who are eager to learn all they can about Cuba. How could this Senator understand what I felt as the plane which I had boarded at Idlewild, New York, four hours before, approached Cuba and, from a mile high, looked down on the neon lights of Havana twinkling in the pure Caribbean dusk.

I knew from the radio and the *New York Times* that the dictator had fled, January 1, and that the ragged, rebel troops, in their youthful beards sworn to go uncut until victory, had fought the last big battle at Santa Clara some 100 miles away and had entered the white, shining capital to the accompaniment of the exultant *Habaneros* who had come, singing, to throw their arms around the liberators. I had read, too, that the big battle at Santa Clara which broke the back of the opposition was decisively joined by the workingmen of the region and thousands of others from Havana who had piled into trucks and roared down the National Highway to the frontlines. A four-day general strike of labor aided the rebel armies enormously. But the reports, in the *Times* and elsewhere, failed, as usual, to deal clearly with the victors' goals, their plans for the future. What heavens would they storm? What new advances had they in mind? I did not believe, knowing something of the dynamics of today's history, that this was merely an exchange of government, as some newspapers suggested. I mused over these matters as the pilot brought the plane to an abrupt angle to prepare for the landing. Suddenly I heard a burst of song in the plane, and there before me, three young men unfurled the Cuban flag with its great single star, knelt on the floor kissing their banner, and began the national anthem.

Men, women bearing their children in their arms, began to weep, and to sing, in a swelling chorus. They were still singing as we touched the ground and they came down the gangplank.

That is when I first met them, *los Liberadores*. Young, bearded guardsmen, in olive green, their rifles slung across their backs, approached, shyly it seemed to me, to welcome these who were, I then learned, some of the 50,000 refugees forced into exile by the Batista government. These young veterans helped the mothers down, carried their infants for them into the waiting room. It was a strange sight, to see the bearded soldiers carrying, with an odd and awkward tenderness, the children, and, I felt, the scene was symbolic of the new, the free Cuba.

Thus I stepped into the Cuban Revolution.

The rebels—the armed forces of the July 26th Movement—had come a long way, indeed, since that midnight landing near Manzanillo, in Oriente, at the eastern end of the island. They had come, not over 75 of them—young, fearless patriots, volunteers for freedom, from Mexico where for months they trained themselves for guerrilla fighting. With great losses they cut their path through an ambushing party of Batista's forces, and made their way up into the high altitudes of the Sierra Maestra range where they found sanctuary among the poor farmers. This was the military beginning of the latest great struggle for Cuba's freedom, that began, in many ways, four centuries before, when the Conquistadores came, with silver cross and iron cannon, to conquer a new world. The centuries saw the blood of countless Cuban patriots seep into the fertile soil of the island.

Uprisings, time and again, were crushed; slave revolts were overwhelmed by gun and cannon; the many wars for liberty in the nineteenth century were prelude to this armed landing and the contemporary brave work

that had been going on underground since the Dictator Batista had overthrown the republic in 1953 in a palace revolt. He was aided by big-time American money that regarded him as the best guarantor for their enormous investments and profits—well over a billion dollars in holdings was the stake. And seven black years of a repression were clamped down upon the country by this Caribbean Hitler.

It did not take long to learn the ABC's of it. That first night on arrival I went through the white, winding, exuberant streets of Havana to the address of a refugee from Republican Spain whom I knew years back. He told me much. He brought me to the homes of others and the story leaped from their eager lips as they talked, and taking me out into the streets along the famous tree-lined Prado I saw thousands of strolling young men, young women, breathing the fresh air of freedom, laughing, talking endlessly because for seven long years they had not dared to talk. And until the sun came up they remained outside, en masse, cherishing each other's company, no longer fearing the skulking *chivato*, that most-despised term in the language—the Spanish word for the informer, the stool-pigeon. The next day and the next, I learned of a terror that had swept the land as Himmler's Gestapo had in Germany a few years before.

I went to speak to Iphegenio Almajedras, the new Chief of Police of Havana, directed to him by my friends. Almajedras had taken over the quarters of the prior, Batista official, and it was a rare incongruity: the offices were richly paneled in mahogany, great, picture-windows opened out to the blue Caribbean and you could see the big yellow mass of Morro Castle on its heights a mile beyond. Who knew how many patriots were tortured in the adjoining rooms?

Now, occupying it, was a new-style police chief who had won laurels in the Revolution, the sole survivor of

three brothers who had joined the rebel army simultaneously.

Aside from the glow of his black eyes, his keen alert air, he looked the part of any man of 27 you could meet on the Havana street—small, wiry, he wore his olive-green uniform carefully brushed as befits the leading police authority of a capital city.

When I told him the name of my newspaper—*The Worker*—he held out his hand. "I know the word *Worker* well," he said.

He told me he was a former taxi-driver, and a member of the trade-unions. He asked me to convey the greetings of the Cuban people to the working people of the United States. Then he said something I was to hear often in the course of my travel around the country. "We hold no animosity against the American people," he said, "for your enemies are our enemies—the monopolies of Wall Street."

Almajedras said that the new police of Havana province whom he headed were, all of them, tried veterans of the war. The Batista police had been displaced, the old uniforms abandoned, and the new police were chosen for their record in the fighting, those who were most selfless in the cause of their people. "We are here to defend the rights of the people," he said, "not to assault or rob them, like the previous police."

This was indeed a new-style police chief, I thought, a strange experience for me, from the United States where the police authority was rather different.

Upon questioning, he described the methods of the previous Batista police. Arrests at random, anyone out after dark was fair game, and could, if he did not have a ready answer upon challenge, be beaten to an inch of his life.

"Many a morning the people rose to find, on their way to work, bodies hanging from the telephone poles, or, in the countryside, from the palm trees." The peo-

ple knew whose work it was. They understood the warning—stay silent, submissive, allow every dirty deed of the authorities to go unchallenged! He told me that some 20,000 of the finest youth and crusaders for freedom were murdered by the Batista police—those of the municipalities, but primarily those directly for the central government, and of the army, the hated SIM. I was to hear the same everywhere I went in the island. "Today," he said, "our new government allows freedom of speech, sponsors it, for all who favor the people, the Revolution. We shall be merciless against those who plot to undermine our new freedom."

II. A TALK WITH "CHE" GUEVARA

THE NEXT DAY I visited the big military fortress on the heights at La Columbia to talk, if possible, to Commandante Ernesto "Che" Guevara, the young Argentine doctor—30 years old—who had volunteered with Castro. Guevara had originally opposed the Peron regime in Argentina, then had gone north to aid, whatever way he could, the new government of Guatemala.

After the United Fruit overthrow of that progressive government, Guevara crossed into Mexico and joined the Castro forces. He had been asked why, he, a doctor, had taken the course he did. "It is more fruitful, in one lifetime, to try to heal nations than to heal individuals," he had said.

I made my way through great, thick, medieval walls and tunnels, to the commandante's office in a big yellow building. Guevara, who has since become the Minister of Cuba's Economy, was a man of middle height, wearing a beret, his curly, black hair tumbling out beneath it, his fringe of beard and his eyes were jet black and very direct. His manner was quiet, almost gentle for a

hard-fighting man whose performance in the field had earned him a position among the rebels next to that of Fidel Castro and his brother Raul.

Guevara sat at his desk in the office jam-packed with petitioners, men and women, some with their children, who had come to inquire about their sons and brothers, and with other requests. He listened courteously and carefully to all, his head bent slightly to one side, gave his adjutant some quick, *sotto-voce* orders and went on to the next and the next.

The room was full of correspondents from the world's newspapers and I heard the correspondent of the *Chicago Tribune* ask Guevara bluntly what he intended to do about the Communists.

For the first time in the hour and a half I sat observing matters, El Commandante's voice rose slightly. "You are," he said firmly, "the fifth American correspondent in a row today who has asked me that same question. Why don't you ask what we intend to do about freedom, hunger, unemployment? Why do you solely have an interest in Communists? I will tell you this, though I am no Communist, I did not see your newspaper or you when the Communists were fighting and dying at our side in the Sierra Maestras? My answer is that they have earned the right to be a legal political party." The correspondent, a thin, lanky man, scribbled furiously, puffed on his cigarette, and the interview ended.

Guevara spoke to me of the country's primary needs; land reform was the foremost. The peasants must get land, he said, and they will get it, they are already getting it. They had fought hard and well, and they had made up the bulk of the revolutionary detachments because they believed that here, at last, were the freedom and the green acres for which they had yearned for centuries.

We would have talked more, but the people seeking an interview kept coming in; a woman of fifty, tall,

austere, in black, entered. When Guevara saw her, he took leave of me and rose to embrace her. She had come to inquire about the fate of her son, one of those who too had been on the Gamma, the now famous craft that bore the Castro warriors to their historic landing. He had not been heard from since the moment that the ship had dropped anchor, and they had made their way to the shore, and were ambushed.

Guevara said a few soft words to her, and she began to weep uncontrollably. The other soldiers in the room, the young, bearded men turned their faces and I understood the scene. The commandante led her gently from the room, his arms about her shoulders.

The next day I flew to the other end of the island, some seven hundred miles away—for Cuba is a long, narrow strip of verdant land surrounded entirely by the blue Caribbean and the Mexican Gulf. I made my way to Santiago de Cuba where, I was told, I could go into the Sierra Maestras, and interview Fidel Castro's brother, Raul. He was in charge, then, of the army in Oriente, the largest province of the land—"where all revolutions begin," as Cubans say. Two and a quarter million live there. The great majority were land laborers on the vast *latifundias* of United Fruit and others.

From the plane I could see the tawny stretches of Santa Clara, then Camaguey, the herds of cattle, the low-lying hills, the rolling lands, not unlike our Kansas and Arizona. When the plane dipped lower I could make out bombed mountain villages and the torn railway tracks—the legacy of the war. And then, when the plane rose to clear the peaks of the Sierra Maestras I looked down to see the rebel fastnesses, where they had held out in the first months, expanded their hold, grew in strength. I could see where they had come down on the plains to deploy their detachments in positional warfare, not solely guerrilla. Up here, a mile high, one saw how the handful could have held out. Great overhanging crags

hid them from the bombing craft above. Thick, wild underbrush and stands of palm could veil them from the frantic probings of the Batista patrols. All the natural qualities of the land here were essential, I could see, to victory.

But there was one ingredient—the chiefest—which I was soon to encounter: that was the enormous, widespread popular support of the rebels. One can be detected, apprehended, on the Sahara desert, three-million square miles in area, if one is friendless. One can manage to escape the pursuer in a single room if it is filled with friends. This I quickly learned when I arrived in Santiago de Cuba whose low-lying, ancient streets of yellow stone and church spires were visible as we reached the center of the Sierras.

Santiago had the air of a city out of the plains of Castile. I received an appointment to talk with Raul Castro the next day at 10—a jeep would come to my lodgings to take me to his quarters. In the meanwhile I meandered around the Central Plaza, entered the cathedral which stood, tall, graceful, for over 400 years; for I was startled to read on the plaque that it had been built (or at least its fundamental section) in 1512—or twenty years after Christopher Columbus had landed here—very near here—in 1492!

While here I learned of the doings of the Masferrer “tigers”—a gang of cut-throats headed by a cool killer, Masferrer who became one of Batista’s standbys. Masferrer had an army of some 200 gangsters whom he deployed to assassinate those Batista wanted done in—did it as a “favor” for his powerful friend. But the “tigers” actually were a blackmail and cut-throat gang which had gotten so strong that it could murder and pillage without police interference. Masferrer used his booty to buy up a local newspaper, and then another daily paper in Havana, and got himself elected to the Senate. In the U.S.A. he was always referred to respectfully as Sena-

tor Masferrer, this Cuban Al Capone, and the last I had read of him he was caught in his yacht fleeing from Havana, by the U.S. Coast Guard (his craft and its holdings impounded; and they included, the *New York Times* had written, eighteen million dollars of cash in dollar bills. And now he has sanctuary in Miami, along with other criminals of war who had been able to escape retribution.

The next day a jeep came for me, on the exact hour stated, to bring me to Commandante Raul Castro's headquarters. They were in a naval barracks and the soldiers stood about in fatigues, around the big yellow modern structures Batista had built to give his armed troops some additional satisfactions that would hold their loyalties. The grounds were spacious, well-kept, had neat cottages for officers, and handsome dormitories for the enlisted men. Now the ragged, bearded men who had slept on rocks and in thickets for two years and more were here; and they took the improvement in lodging naturally, without fanfare or hesitation.

The corporal who accompanied me to Raul's office had a short, reddish beard, and a pair of twinkling eyes as he surveyed me. "You are a man of learning, I take it," he said, sizing me up. "Wait until you meet our Raul. He has read every book that should be read. He has as much in his head as a library has books."

I was ushered into the quarters by this merry corporal and found a dozen or so of young, bearded men, some wearing spectacles, giving them an odd, owlish appearance, and Raul shook hands, a bit coolly I thought, for I detect in myself a certain sense of guilt for the crimes my countrymen of wealth have committed here and elsewhere. But possibly it is his manner generally. He was slight in build, of medium height, wearing a beret. Unlike his brother, his beard was wispy, but his head of hair was thick and it was caught up in the back in a pony-tail. A young woman translated and they

brought a tray of hors-d'ouvres and some cups of that powerful, sweet Cuban coffee.

Among the many questions I asked and which he freely answered, turning, at times to his associates who added facts or ideas; they followed the talk carefully, and I could assess how collective their mode of work was. One or another would interpolate when Raul finished a point, and he nodded, in agreement, generally, or sometimes indicated his difference with the viewpoint. I found that commonality of work often throughout the island as I talked to others of the July 26th Movement, as well as of the Partido Socialista Popular.

How, I asked, was it that men like his brother and himself—trained in the universities—fought so well in guerrilla warfare. I was not referring to courage alone; I had in mind the mastery of tactics and strategy in the field. He replied that when they were in exile, in Mexico, he had passed word out among the sympathizers within the 50,000 exiles scattered along the hemisphere, that he wanted all books, any books, that dealt with guerrilla warfare. He studied them, made digests, and lectured on them to his men. "That I did," he said, "from the many books that came." Most valuable, he said, was that of the Chinese leader Mao Tse-tung; "I indeed read many and took notes on them, for example, Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*."

I asked him many questions about perspectives, and, as from Guevara I got from him the primary impression of a projected assault upon poverty by developing the land through a big program of land reform.

There were certainly no illusions about Wall Street and the big corporations down here; they regarded their economy as a fief to the Wall Street overlords. It has been that way, Raul said, since the Spanish-American war and its aftermath. He spoke coolly, deliberately, with no flights of oratory, without gestures. Direct.

Incidentally, he said, the Cuban people would have

won their independence in their civil war with Spain in the last decade of the 19th century but the U.S. imperialists intervened to snatch it from the people. From that time on, after the Platt Amendment went into effect in 1903, Cuba had been a semi-colony of Wall Street.

The new government intended to change all that, he said, and by methods that were tried and trusted, within the canons of international law, yes, but they would be intractable about their policies.

What were those policies? Land reform, first of all. Law No. 3 was promulgated while they were still in the mountains. It pledged to give each peasant in Cuba who so wished, two *caballerias* of land (a *caballeria* is 331½ acres). In other words, each Cuban peasant could apply for and receive nearly 67 acres of land without cost. The the new Government would help him with the latest scientific information on farming, with credits, loans, and as soon as possible, with implements—tractors, as well as seed. This distribution of land was Cuba's greatest need, Raul said. Yes, they began their program in the areas they liberated, giving land to peasants as they went along; and, by word of mouth, peasants knew of this *reforma agraria* through the length and breadth of the land.

To achieve all this, and industrialization, the next and simultaneous big need, required the continued unity of the people that had been forged in the hot fires of the civil war. Yes, he thought unity would remain, although there were those who have different ideas of the future.

They would prevail over all their obstacles, he said. He felt that the imperialists of the States could no longer pull off their bone-crushing, imperialist invasions, not openly, that is. Too many Latins felt too enthusiastically about the Cuban Revolution, he believed, and if the Yankees start something there would be not one brick standing on another of any American Embassy throughout the hemisphere.

III. WHAT CUBAN COMMUNISTS SAID

I RETURNED TO Havana to interview many more typical figures of the Revolution. A day later, I visited the newspaper *Hoy* (*Today*), the organ of the Partido Socialista Popular—the Cuban Communist Party. It had appeared on the streets as a daily newspaper once again the first day of victory, January 1, 1959. Once it had been the powerful, second-largest organ in the country, in the days before Batista returned to snatch power, seven years before. Then it was driven underground, obliged to come out as a weekly; but come out it did, all the years of the Batista terror. It was printed on underground presses, distributed by fearless *Cubanos* and *Cubanas*, even by their children, as I learned when I encountered a lovely Cuban child of twelve, Carmen Gomez, who had insisted on doing her patriotic, her revolutionary stint. People mature quickly under adversity, and I marveled as I looked at her, with her round, childish, olive face, her glowing black eyes with their direct glance, who had outwitted the dread secret police of the Batista government.

They showed me a stack of the typical literature printed underground, one copy each for the archives. It stood as high as a tall man, six foot high or so, of separate leaflets, pamphlets, and even books. Sampling through them I saw they dealt with every problem that occupied the people: freedom, higher wages, lower rents, housing, health, and there was even, for the students, a pamphlet on abstract art! All these had been written secretly, printed secretly, distributed secretly, in the millions, during the reign of the dictator whose uniformed and plain-clothes police were searching high and low for anybody engaged in this perilous work. And woe to those they captured.

At the editorial offices I met Anibal Escalante, one of Blas Roca's associates in the leadership of the party.

I had been to Cuba once before, 19 years ago in 1940. At that time a progressive upsurge swept the country and many Left-wing candidates and coalitions between the Left-wing and the Liberals won mayoralties and council seats, in addition to electing a considerable number of their leaders to the Cuban Congress and Senate. In those days, *Noticias de Hoy* had the second largest circulation on the island and owned a radio station. It was the beloved organ of the most beloved political party of the proletariat and the peasantry, of the workers in the Cuban Confederation of Labor (CTC) who chose a Communist leader, the Negro worker, Lazaro Peña, as its top-most officer). I remembered Escalante then as a young, clean-shaven, slim man, intense in manner, scholarly in approach to questions, and I had so described him in my dispatches then as well as in the chapter on Cuba in my book *No Men Are Strangers*.

Today, he was a grizzled gray, wore a big scraggly mustache, had a shock of iron-gray hair, and was more than portly. After our Latin *embrazo*, I remarked jokingly that time had not dealt gently with us, that although he retained his youthful handsomeness, he was somewhat different than I remembered him. Whether it was masculine pride which all of us have, he threw a big arm around my shoulder, laughingly, and bade me not make fun of his heft, which the others in his Party did often enough. "It is simply a disguise," he smiled, "and I shall get rid of this disguise at the earliest nature will permit." He told me that when the Batista terror began, and the Partido was driven underground, the leaders were obliged to change their appearance in order to continue their duties. Some of us, he laughed, remained unchanged no matter what disguise we assumed. But his—the changeover from a slim, clean-shaven youthful-looking man to one of a flat-footed corpulence and a big pair of provincial *Cubano mustachios*, had won him a successful camouflage. "I was able to walk around

town, go to any part of the country," he said, "and nobody suspected me. I even visited a brother in the time of Batista, and my kinfolk quailed when the ponderous stranger entered the house." He told how one night the Army's secret police, the SIM, held a house-to-house roundup seeking Communist leaders. There was a knock at his door and he hastily managed to conceal some copies of newspapers he was reading. In walked three of the country's worst killers, Police Chief Ventura's picked elite: they asked Escalante whether he knew of any Communist leader hiding in the building, men like Anibal Escalante, or Blas Roca or Juan Marinello. Escalante shrugged, said he knew nobody of that sort, casually opened the door to the next room for them to examine, and he walked with them around his small, bare apartment. They examined all the closets, looked under the bed, into the kitchen, and satisfying themselves that men like Escalante were not hiding in the premises, swaggered out the door.

"Thus," he said, "you see my disguise did some good. But, my wife and kin object to my silhouette: the doctor does too, so I shall soon return to my normal self."

IV. SCHOLARSHIP AS BRIBE

BUT NOT ALL WERE as fortunate. One young man of 25, a youth leader, gaunt, his face still drawn by his travail, told me how he had been snatched up on the *Prado*, taken to police headquarters, questioned by the nattily dressed chief of the secret police Ventura, who always wore white suits of silk fabric, and then, when the young man refused to give names or admit to anything they sought to wring from him, he was handed over to half a dozen plug-uglies who beat him unconscious with sawed-off billiard cues; then he was brought to consciousness by

buckets of water thrown into his face, then questioned again, then beaten again, until he scarcely knew if he were alive or dead.

And then, on the fourth day of this Golgotha, a new police officer entered, waved a hand to halt the beatings, spoke civilly to him, brought him into his office, gave him food and cigarettes. "I am sorry," the officer said smoothly, "that they are behaving so outrageously toward a man of principle and learning. It was not of my doing. I have come to talk to you man to man." Then he said, "Since you are, as we know, an exemplary scholar, one with a future before him, I bring you this offer." He had not come to "wring" names from the young man, nor to subject him to "further indignities," but to "offer him life."

"Abandon this clandestine work and resume your studies. We shall ask no questions, but we shall guarantee you four years study at Columbia University in New York. You have but to say the word, and tomorrow, as soon as you are packed, you and your wife will be on an airplane to New York, free forever from this dangerous, fruitless, albeit idealistic activity of yours." When the young man refused, the officer shook his head with a show of sorrow. "Think it over," he said, and he would come tomorrow for the answer. That night the young man's wife was visited by the plain-clothes police, told of the offer, urged to persuade her husband, for otherwise matters might "fare badly" for the two of them.

The wife was as adamantly principled as her husband. He was sent to the Isle of Pines, marched into an ancient prison filled with political prisoners, and the beatings let down.

It was significant, he related, that the trade-unionists nationally went on strike, under Batista, protesting the savage treatment accorded the jailed. He remained in solitary confinement until the bearded soldiers broke in, on the day of victory, and freed him.

For a year he had been in his silent cell, seeing only the fingers of his jailer who shoved a tin plate of gruel under his door daily. "I had forgotten how to talk," the young man said. "When they freed me I thought I was speaking in thanks but no sounds came from my lips." But speech returns quickly in freedom, he said, with a slow smile.

I asked how he remained sane these long, torturous months and he shrugged. "There was one saving grace," he replied. "They permitted my wife to send me books. Only novels; anything they regarded as political they withheld. One book my wife sent me was Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, but the prison authorities suspiciously put it aside, refused to give it to me on grounds that it was clearly a political treatise."

So the stories went, one after the other my first days in Cuba, and I learned what the press of the United States had carefully concealed from our public. I was to learn even worse: they brought me to the windowless torture chambers where the fiends, for some psychological reason perhaps an alienist could explain, kept heaps of the fingernails they had pulled from their victims, held them in wicker baskets, like weird, savage trophies of Neanderthal headhunters. And I learned from the anguished kin of the corpses of students who would be found, lying on the pavements, with their severed testicles carefully arranged on their shoulders. And of daughters raped by the police before their fathers who were held by the torturers to endure the horrible sight. And how, in Oriente, the former mayor of Manzanillo, a beloved leader of the peasants and workers of the region, had been stopped on a street in Guantanamo City, arrested and tortured; his body had just been found under the flagstones of a public building, the head and the limbs severed from the torso.

This was the Batista regime: horror upon horror until Cuban men would not go out after dark. Home

from work, they had their dinner, locked the shutters and doors, and went to an uneasy bed from which they awoke repeatedly during the night, upon any slightest noise, certainly whenever they heard the motor of a prowling car in which the political police toured the streets.

The American ambassadors knew about all this, they told me. *Revolucion*, organ of the July 26th Movement, in the issue of January 27th, said members of the FBI were given cards of identity—their photographs on them, their names beneath—as honorary members of the police. They were privy to all that happened, *Revolucion* insisted. I was told they helped finger many who were arrested, beaten, tortured. The cards of identity were published for the nation to see.

But enough of horrors.

I went home with the editor of *Hoy*, a square, scholarly man of forty-three, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, who still wore the Van Dyke beard he had grown in the Sierra Maestras, the mountains where the first guerrilla bands of freedom formed. He had, I learned, made his way into the mountain-wilderness at the outset and worked with the leaders of the July 26th Movement.

Many of his party, the *Partido Socialista Popular*, had volunteered; three emerged from the fighting as “*commandantes*”—three of the Army’s total of seventeen.

“We were of all categories,” Rodriguez said, as he apologized for the disarray in his home. Crates were unpacked on the floor. The furniture was piled high. This was his home before he went into the underground, before he went up into the mountains. Now he and his family were back again, and, he said, happily, his books, impounded by the Batista authorities to be used against him as evidence in a projected trial if he were captured, had been held intact in a government warehouse of dangerous books.

As we sat talking some soldiers, young and bearded,

entered, carrying more crates of the books in. I joined him in the pleasant occupation of returning liberated books to the shelves—mute but eloquent prisoners—and how many I recognized, the classics of literature, American as well as of the world, Shakespeare, Victor Hugo, Tolstoy, political works, of Marx and Engels and Lenin, as well as others I recognized with a warm glow of familiarity—the books of William Z. Foster, of Eugene Dennis, of the late James T. Ford . . . I even saw, with a thrill, one of my own pamphlets. Yes, home again, and he told me how well men of all colors, religious backgrounds, Catholics, Protestants, agnostics, atheists, workers, students, and peasants (the latter in the majority for, after all, Cuba is dominantly an agrarian country) had fought together, lived together, in the common goal of liberty. How would that unity fare now, I asked, after the battle was won, and victory had come. “The battle begins again,” he said matter-of-factly, “in different terms. The unity will endure,” he answered with a confident note in his voice. “With ups and downs, difficulties, yes. But it can be done.”

From him, and others afterwards, I gathered the full nature of the revolution. They regarded it as “an advanced, popular national revolution,” for sovereignty, for independence, for the civil rights of the folk. It had been won by a coalition of all classes, except the big farmers and the big bourgeoisie. Some of the national bourgeoisie has supported it—the owners of Bacardi Rum for instance. It could go far to improve the lot of his impoverished people. I sensed Rodriguez’ warm admiration for Fidel Castro and the others who had led the armed phase of the Revolution.

Carlos Rafael showed me the thesis of his Party which was published on the very first day of victory. “1959,” it said, “is unlike any other year in history.” It was not 1954, when the Yankee imperialists, through United Fruit, struck Guatemala down, with its policy

no more radical than that of the U.S.'s own New Deal.

The year 1959 was different than all others because it saw a world in which an anti-colonial revolution was sweeping the continents; Asia, Africa, and here in Latin America millions, the majority of the peasants in all the lands, knew the role of *imperialismo Yanqui*, and what it had done traditionally on the continent. Furthermore, 1959 was a year in which the socialist sector of the world—one-third of humanity—a billion human beings—were stronger for peace, for freedom, than their opponents in the Western capitalist lands. These were not imponderables, Carlos said, they were real factors that would come to the aid of the new Cuba. Naturally, there were many shoals and reefs; there would be unforeseen challenges and many of them would be of a harrowing nature. But the changed relationship of forces in the world was basic and was irreversible. And it was this that he (and he said he reflected his Party's viewpoint), based his optimism on. That optimism spelled out the confidence the others in the rebel ranks felt.

But the present Cabinet, his paper *Hoy* declared, did not fully represent the coalition of national-liberation groups that won the victory. There was a right, center and left in that national-liberation coalition. They represented the forces of the national bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie, the workers and the peasants—the latter the most numerous of all. But the Cabinet was weighted toward the right forces of the Revolution—primarily spokesmen for the middle classes. There would rise a national need for the Cabinet to conform to the shape of the coalition. "That would come in time." But so long as it did not happen, the Revolution would not move as fast as it might. The PSP slogan was "Defend the Revolution by Advancing It." In other words, no revolution dare stand still. It must move forward, or else it will go back. There is no retaining a status quo in history

when all else about you is changing, moving ahead, moving back.

To advance, in Cuba, meant vigilance in advancing the cause of the farmers, the workers, the people generally. The Revolution must become more revolutionary, isolating its enemies within, and the best guarantee of that was to doggedly pursue a policy of unity, never swerve from that, a unity that can, at the same time, permit the differences of opinion within that coalition to be aired democratically, argued out and concluded along constructive lines.

That unity could then be applied to the solutions of many problems—to the chronic unemployment, the landlessness, the consequent raging poverty.

V. HARD FACTS

WHAT THOSE PROBLEMS WERE—and possible solutions—as the Marxists of the land saw it, was perhaps most clearly presented to me by the Marxist economist Jacinto Torres, I found a small, mustached man with a pair of bright eyes behind spectacles who spoke good English, in a somewhat professional manner.

His home was stacked with books, the potted plants obscured many of the titles which ranged the world's studies of its economy. He answered my questions directly, without hesitance, pausing only occasionally to find an eluding word to express precisely what he wanted to say. The principal economic problem of Cuba grew out of the fact that its specialization in sugar—an agrarian fact imposed upon it by the Yankee usurpers since the turn of the century—created conditions wherein Cuba had to import more than \$150 million of agricultural products per year, and even more of manufactured articles.

It was an irony of history, tragic in its consequences, that Cuba was obliged to import rice, tomatoes, onions and other staples that grew readily on its soil, and of which thousands of tons were once produced. But since a tiny percentage of the populace owned the greatest part of the soil, they saw to it that every acre of tillable land went to the money crop—Cuba's white gold—sugar. And so the others had to be imported, primarily from the United States at costs that were virtually prohibitive. Annually, for example, the small nation of 6,500,000 had to import some \$50-60 million worth of rice alone, a favorite staple, and \$20-30 million in textiles.

The historic reasons for this are known: a few dozen fabulously rich Cubans plus giant American sugar and cattle interests owned three-quarters of the land. Over forty percent of the nation's sugar production, with an annual value of about seven hundred millions, was in the hands of U.S. corporations in 1958. (At one time it had been 70 percent.) An additional 10 to 20 per cent was owned by Canadian, Spanish and other foreign interests. So one can see that Cubans owned less than half of the sugar product annually which accounted for about two-thirds of Cuba's national income, and fully 80 percent of her export.

Even the profits accruing to the Cuban sugar barons did not remain in Cuba: most of the return was banked or invested abroad. And so with the great cattle ranches, so with the national mineral resources (90 per cent in American hands). So, too, with its oil, entirely British or U.S.-owned, and with its public utilities, 80 per cent American-owned.

And at this time, when I spoke, it was known that a million Cuban women and children had never worn shoes. Half a million farmers had never tasted milk or meat.

Cuba's semi-colonial status had brought the scourge of a chronic unemployment upon its 6,500,000 inhabi-

tants; of its working force which was as high as 2,400,000, some seven hundred thousand were unemployed during the slack season annually (the sugar harvest season lasted only three months), and some 200,000 were unemployed all year.

In the countryside, the 1946 agricultural census found that the farm laborer worked four months average a year. The most recent investigation made two years before the Revolution by the Catholic University Association uncovered malnutrition, hunger, horrible hygienic conditions among peasants and farm workers caused by the economic situation. And the 1956-57 National Council of Economy found the above figures and also discovered that 60 percent of those who had jobs were working less than 30 hours a week.

I asked the economist the perspectives for industrializing the country. He replied in his concise manner:

"Our land is rich in natural resources; take iron: we know we are the fourth largest reserve in the world. We have manganese, copper, chromium, cobalt, nickel, and there is a great probability that we have oil. As to nickel, we are probably the world's second, and certainly the third, biggest producer. There is certainly enough iron, manganese and chromium to produce hundreds of thousands of tons of steel. Though we are short of coal, there are no few Latin-American countries that are producing steel even while they are importing coal.

"Nor is coal the only source of energy for us. Although water power is limited to certain sections of the country, we can convert that to electrical energies. We have some rivers that make that possible: the Hanabánilla, the Toa, the Valle, to name but three."

Torres spoke of Electric Bond and Share, whose Cuban subsidiary is the Cuban Company of Electricity. It obtains its electric power by using oil or coal. It had been charging 18 cents per kilowatt from 1926 to 1933, but in the latter year it was forced by the Government, in

the midst of revolution then, to reduce its price from 18 cents per kilowatt to 9.30 cents, and the present revolutionary government should reduce it further. (As a matter of fact it has been cut since this writing to 6.50 cents. And it can still be reduced, according to an inquiry by the Official Commission.)

As to coal and oil products, he said, these will rise with mechanization. Oil is of tremendous importance to Cuba. The policy of the big oil trusts was to maintain Cuba as a reserve. They concealed the results of all searches made. And encouraging experiments have been made towards the goal of producing a high quality fuel from sugar cane pulp and from asphalt.

How did the native capitalists regard all this, I asked. Torres spread his hands. Many are not investing in Cuba in order to foment the failure of the Revolution. That is true of foreign capital, as well as some of the native. And there is now a public debt of one billion, three hundred million dollars.

One of the most hopeful signs on the horizon, he said, was the offer of the workers in the trade-unions to give four percent of their salaries for three years to buy bonds as a loan to the government. If well organized, the economist said, the workers' contributions alone can be upward of \$40 million a year.

Somewhere, in the capital, the lights were burning all night as young economists pored over the figures; there were conferences, discussions, debates within the walls, and a program was crystallizing. In the main it evoked the major needs of the country, and offered certain solutions.

The Partido Socialista Popular made its proposals; always in the direction of solving the rural impoverishment as quickly as possible, i.e., distribution of land to the peasants, and the quickest perspectives to begin industrialization. But it kept in mind the ever-present need to move under the imperatives of a national unity, to

find solutions that would enhance the nation's prospects as a whole; the PSP sought the specific and immediate improvement of the masses' lot.

There was no question that certain elements in the Government and in the cabinet itself hesitated and feared the social advances necessary to guarantee the Revolution. The new President, Manuel Uruttia, was one of these. There were others. Certain individuals who had gone along with the Revolution in its early stages, and remained with it to the ouster of Batista, began to balk at the progressive reforms. Behind the scenes an attack was being fomented by these, and spurred on, secretly, within the country, by agents of American imperialism. The Hitler weapon of anti-Communism began to be felt.

Abroad, over that narrow stretch of seventy miles of water, the plutocrats who had great sums invested in Cuba—as a vassal of American policy—were worrying. Many United States newspapers—when they were faced with a hard fact—the impending victory of the rebels—had originally written favorably about Castro. The *New York Times*, always sensitive to the imperialist goals of the big stockholders, had, late in 1958, sent Herbert S. Matthews to Cuba. He made his way up into the Sierra Maestras secretly, and his consequent articles were distinctly pro-Castro.

Large sections of American imperialism were realizing that Batista no longer could rule the roost—that the corruption, the “outstretched palm” of bribery, the hatred accumulating against his regime, and its savage repressions, had gotten out of hand. It was time for a change.

When Castro had won, certain periodicals, like *Newsweek*, ostensibly favored the change, but they described Castro as a “wild young colt—that could be tamed.”

They put their bets on the ever-present weapon in their hands—untold bribery, the opportunity to enrich himself, in the time-honored fashion of Batista and before him, of Machado. It had worked without fail in the past.

Was there any reason it could not work today?

Nonetheless a subtle, and not so subtle, change was quickly discernible in the press. It responded rapidly to the apprehensions of the American overlords who began to feel anguish when they saw that land expropriation was not slowing down; that it was moving into areas of big American interests. They saw that the new regime was moving into the next stage. The first was the grant of land to the peasants on the Sierra Maestra where they had lived on soil owned by absentee landlords whose title came down from old Spanish documents. The next stage, under Agrarian Reform Law No. 3, was to activate the 1940 Cuban Constitution which strictly forbade *latifundias* to hold more than a thousand acres in a single property. This statute had never been enforced; now it was beginning to be enforced. (The sole exceptions to this new law were in the cultivation of rice, and on the grazing lands; these could have as much as 3,316 acres if they showed that it helped production.)

So 700,000 landless peasants began to get their precious land grants of nearly 67 acres. Outside capitalists were riled by the fact that foreigners were forbidden to own land by any device; neither by inheritance, nor by purchase, nor by stock companies in which they had holdings. U.S. interests saw arising what in the states was called "clean government." No longer could they rely upon the outstretched palm. No longer were the corrupt officials immediately available. Havana journalists who had been on Batista payrolls began to find it harder and harder to write the lie—the monthly stint from the Government and other agencies was gone. Tax laws were being changed so that the main tax-burden would fall on the wealthier, on the foreign holders. Tax collections began to be enforced. Thousands who had found it easy to evade taxes now had to cough up, not only today's taxes, but those they had evaded in the past.

A dread phenomenon began to show itself to the out-

side millionaires who had found the country so rich a preserve; the new government began to control the currency and stop the flight of Cuban capital. Even while I was there in January and early February of 1959 it reduced imports by more than 30 percent.

VI. "YOU HAD YOUR NUERENBERG"

THE OUTCRY ROSE to gale proportions in the States. A gigantic campaign unfolded against the Cuban Government because it expressed determination to erase, once and for all, the class of war-criminals who had "robbed, killed and tortured," violating every canon of civilization and international law. The headlines began to grow blacker and bigger in the newspapers abroad: the term "bloodbath" was to be found in print, on the radio and television, as killers were apprehended, tried, and executed when they were found guilty. Though they had the right to counsel, and though witnesses were heard and gave evidence which was weighed by the Revolutionary tribunals, the cry rose of "summary executions," and propaganda exploded virtually overnight that Castro was as bloodthirsty as Batista ever had been—the press now belatedly and laggardly mentioned the latter's "excesses." But although he had such "deficiencies," still, wasn't his an "efficient" government? And was he not a friend of the United States? Senator Ellender's diatribe was typical. This spokesman for the Louisiana sugarcane interests called the new regime nothing but a "bunch of bandits, burning sugar plantations." Even in January, 1959, while I was in the island such organs as *U.S. News and World Report* began to raise the spectre of a "new dictatorship," and press services foresaw the need for U.S. intervention to "save Cuba from chaos."

By February, North American newspapermen were

grabbing planes by the scores at Idlewild. Toting portable typewriters, they invaded Cuba in platoons and squads and began to keep score on the executions, as though it were a football game. "Two more shot today"—"Five more"—the drumbeat of hostility to the new Cuba grew louder and louder.

Under these circumstances the Castro government made a decision. It would show the world—and especially the American press—precisely how it was administering justice: how it had to do what needed to be done to eradicate those notorious torturers and murderers who had killed under Machado, had lived on to kill and loot under Batista, and were ready to carry on now given the slightest opportunity.

A public trial was scheduled in Havana of one of the most savage of all killers: Captain Jesus Soto Blanco who was charged with the specific murder of 110 peasants in the Oriente, where he had burned some of them in their huts.

I decided to attend the trial, in the Palacio de Deportes, the big amphitheater in Havana, early in February, 1959. One the eve of the trial Castro's government called a mass demonstration in Havana, before the Presidential palace, to illustrate the attitude of the Cuban people.

I rose early that morning and saw the people begin to file into the great green park which stretched a mile from the palace to the sea. They began trudging in shortly after dawn, arriving from all the surrounding regions; by foot, the sombreroed peasants carrying banners and machetes, the sharp instrument they used to chop the sugar cane; the trade-unionists in Sunday clothes marched by contingents from their locals; street-car conductors, carpenters, bank-clerks, teachers, and soon, by eight in the morning, the streets were thick, from pavement to pavement, with marchers bearing great banners that demanded "Death to the torturers." They avowed their fealty to

"Fidel" and his policies. They rejected the interference of *imperialismo yanqui*.

Young and old, women, men, children, whole families made their way to the great palm-lined park where, at the side of the Palacio, a newly constructed grandstand stood to hold the correspondents, and before that a platform for the speakers. They jammed that mile so thick it took me some twenty minutes to edge my way up to the platform where I found a foothold some feet away from the microphone, near one of the cameramen from CBS. Television cameramen were grinding away; newspapermen were filling their grandstand, some 400-odd, watching this unprecedented spectacle where virtually a sixth of a nation assembled in one spot! The peasants, the workers, the intellectuals, the middle-classes kept coming. Humanity poured in through all the avenues. When Castro began to speak it was like Judgement Day when all souls assemble. There, before you, stood one million humans. They were packed together so thick there was no room to applaud; they raised their hands above their heads to clap their palms together. It was a startling spectacle to see a million pairs of hands rise and applaud when Castro asked if they supported the Government's policies executing the killers. "Si, Fidel," the roar went up from a million throats.

The sky above was a cloudless turquoise and a hot sun burned. Here and there through the crowds someone would wilt in the crush and faint. Red Cross stretcher bearers carried them off, holding the person on the stretcher above the heads of the audience. Castro referred to the day's heat and proposed to speak briefly; a roar rose urging him to speak on, to say everything that needed saying. They could take it. He spoke, in accordance with their wishes.

There have been many snide references in the U.S. press about the length of his speeches, but I saw instantly here that he was responding to the people's will. Roar

after roar of applause went up as he outlined the history of the Revolution, gave instances of previous revolutions in the land, warned of the shoals and projected the aspirations. He was touching their innermost hopes. One hour, two, three, four passed, the sun began to descend in the West, his resonant voice grew hoarse, but each time he proposed to stop the crowds shouted for him to go on.

At one point, he turned to the assembly of correspondents and addressed himself to them directly, "Yes, gentlemen," he said, "we are determined to exterminate the killers. They will not live on to murder again. And you, ladies and gentlemen," he declared, "where were your voices when Batista was ruling here like Himmler's Gestapo? Where? I didn't hear your voices when they were torturing and murdering twenty thousand of our finest sons and daughters. You were silent then. And, yes, I will ask you again: where were your voices when the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, after the war was in the bag for the Allied cause? You were silent then. And yes, I must ask you further. Where were your voices when the innocent Americans Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were murdered? An entire world outside your borders shouted its prayers and its outrage. Where were your voices then? What have you come to sit in judgment on? The execution of mankind's enemies—torturers, killers, war criminals. Did you not hold your Nuremburg trials? Why do you interfere with us when we try our mass killers?"

Each question was met by a thundering applause; two million hands clapped above the heads, like flying birds; the crowd stood on its feet some seven hours as the slim crescent of a moon replaced the burning sun. They had come to hear, and they heard exactly what they wanted to hear: the adamant decision to rid Cuba of those found guilty of having tortured and murdered their loved ones.

The next morning the trial began in the great amphitheater of the Palacio de Deportes. It seemed as though all Havana were there. Men and women, and no few children came, and packed the circular stands, watching every move in the stage below. A Revolutionary Tribunal of a dozen veterans, most of them bearded, sat to one side of the platform.

A microphone stood in the center through which the actors in this drama addressed the court. Vendors selling tiny cups of coffee circulated through the stands, as the witnesses—mostly peasants—*guajaritas*—from the mountains came in and stood behind the stage.

Although the press and photographers were originally warned not to get onto the stage, the rules were altered and some sixty photographers made their mad rush to the rear of it, snapping pictures.

There sat the defendant—former Captain Jesus Soso Blanco, of the old Cuban Army. He was a man of fifty, squarely built, with great black eyebrows on a rather handsome but foxy face. The bearded advocate-general, the prosecuting attorney, read the indictment. On such and such a day the defendant had murdered, by firing squad, such and such a defendant. The total came to 110.

Then the defendant came before the microphone. He stood in blue dungarees, at ease, and raising his manacled hands aloft, he arrogantly said this scene reminded him of the Coliseum of Rome, when the Christians were thrown to the lions. "I hope I am mistaken," he said, as a thunder of boos went up. As he spoke you saw that the man was no fool; he went on to marshal his arguments with a considerable degree of skill, pleading that he was simply doing his duty as a Cuban patriot, acting as he had in what he regarded as the best interests of his country. He had only followed the orders of higher-ups; and in an army, and at war, "any man who calls himself a man" was obliged to do things, act in a way that vio-

lated his sense of humanity. As for himself, he had no regrets or apologies. What he had done he had done—but always in the interests of his country—"as I saw it," and always following the orders of his superiors.

It was clearly the argument of the Nuremburg defendants—Goering, Goebbels, Frick and the others. They too had only "followed orders"; they too had acted in "the nation's patriotic interests as they saw it."

But the audience—fresh out of the knowledge of tortures, killings, the scenes of corruption and graft, was in no mood to heed his eloquence. Waves of boos sounded as he spoke; when he finished, he smiled ironically at the stands, and then, unattended, went back and took his seat among the newspapermen and photographers who had crept through to the stage. He sat, smiling, defiant, a picture of insouciance.

Then the witnesses were called; they came, singly, to deliver their testimony. Each was a gaunt, earnest man or woman clearly of the countryside by their garb and their rustic manner.

The first woman who spoke, a woman of fifty, told how the Captain had come to their village, heading his detachment, took men at random from the homes, some fifteen of them, and shot them on the pavements outside their homes. She told the story with a wealth of plain, unvarnished, undramatic detail. I could see that even the correspondents were impressed.

When she was asked to identify the Captain who, she was informed, sat on the stage, she turned and scrutinized the faces of everybody near her. When her eyes came to the Captain, she started. This was the first time she had seen him since the murder of her husband. She leaped from the microphone, her fingers clawed, rushing at him and screaming: "Murderer, murderer! You murdered the father of my children!"

The gentle remonstrance of the bearded guards prevented her from getting at the captain who sat, with that

strange, ironic smile, his arms folded across his chest.

So witness after witness testified, and the women, always the women. One screamed as she recognized him, and was only prevented by the pleading of the guards from assaulting the Batista officer. Each time the crowds in the stands stirred uneasily; each time their voices went up as the women wept.

The crowd could scarcely remain seated when a youngster of twelve told his story. "My father was in the house," he said, "when the Captain came in. He told my father to come with him. My father then took off his wrist watch and his ring and put them on my hand. I grabbed my father by the arm and tried to take him away from the officer.

The officer said, "Don't you worry, hombre, you'll get your father back right away.' The Captain told us all to lie down on the floor and not get up until the soldiers leave the village. But as soon as he took my father out, I got up from the floor and ran to the window. I saw the soldiers stand and aim and fire at my father and I saw him fall on the street." The atmosphere had become unbearable as the witnesses testified, and this youngster was the climax.

I studied Jesus Soso Blanco's face; his hair, neat until now, was in disarray; the features of his face had become strained; he no longer sat defiantly with his arms crossed over his chest. He was a man thoroughly frightened.

VII. "THEY GOT MY BROTHER"

THE REVOLUTIONARY TRIBUNAL went out near midnight. I sat with my interpreter, a young, pretty woman of twenty-two whose family were of the upper crust of Havana society.

She had volunteered to translate the rapid flow of Spanish for me, and I was grateful. She spoke English perfectly and when the tribunal went out, after the long, harrowing day she said she had to go home, to rest.

I said I would remain to hear the verdict which might be long in coming. "I want you to promise one thing," she said, "there is a rumor that if the verdict is 'Guilty,' they might execute him immediately in the Columbia barracks. I understand the correspondents may be permitted to attend. If so, I want you to promise to call me immediately. I want to be there when it happens."

I stared at her gentle, lovely face, and wondered why she insisted on attending the execution. "I will tell you why tomorrow," she said.

The verdict was guilty; but the Revolutionary Tribunal granted the defendant his requested appeal. He had been taken back to the prison barracks.

I asked my interpreter the next day why she had made her surprising demand. "I do not like to tell it," she said, "but I will. My brother, my only brother, was a wonderful young man. Everybody predicted a brilliant career for him. He was tall, graceful, one of the city's handsomest men. One night he came to my apartment to stay over, as he often did. Near dawn I heard voices in the living room, and throwing on my robe, I ran out. There were Ventura's men—and Ventura—holding my brother, and they were about to take him out the door. I rushed forward and asked Ventura why. Oh, I knew Ventura, that darling of society! So polite, the soul of grace! Always dressed *au mode* in his latest cut white silk suit.

He smiled and said don't worry, my dear, we just are checking a few things, everything will be all right.

My heart sank for I knew Ventura's reputation; he would often attend a soiree and when he got a telephone call, he would ask everybody's pardon saying duty calls, and he would leave. We knew why. They had caught a revolutionary or a suspect. The revolutionaries were tough, he confided to one of my friends, and he had to go to the certain place and there, we knew, he did his "duty." We heard how he carried a small, pearl-handled revolver in his inside pocket. And we knew that he would use other weapons first to get them 'to talk.' We knew a lot more about him than he suspected. And when he took my brother, I almost died." She had hastily dressed, made the rounds of the police barracks, going first to the feared Barracks No. 3 where it was said the grillings took place. They denied his presence, shunted her from police station to station for three days. "I called all our family's friends. Many were in high places. One told me that they suspected my brother of storing guns for the revolutionaries. When I caught up with my brother, in a certain station, they told me I could take care of him. When they let me see him, he was unrecognizable. His eyes were swollen closed and black; his face was a mass of blood; he lay moaning and he did not recognize me. I got an ambulance and a doctor and brought him home. I nursed him for weeks while he lay in delirium, and failed to recognize me. When he finally regained his mind, he was a broken man, a different man. He never smiled; he showed no emotion, he talked in a flat, dull voice, this young brother of mine who was always laughing. He is still under treatment, five months later, and I don't know whether he will ever be normal again." She turned away.

I had my answer.

Multiply this story by twenty thousand, and you will have the number of families who lost sons and daughters

to the Batista terror. Multiply it by several hundred thousand and you will have the number of Cubans who were arrested at one time or another. Multiply it by some six millions and you will have the number who knew what was happening. For such reason you will understand Marceline Lopez, former stenographer, who had, two years before—she told me—got up from her desk one day, went home, packed a small handbag, took a bus and made her way across country to the Sierra Maestra to join the rebels. “I had no idea where they were,” she said. “I began to climb the mountains. It got dark, I lost my way. I climbed between some rocks under a tree to find shelter and try to sleep until dawn. I heard the animals padding around. I was more scared of them than I was of Batista’s patrols. But I got through that, then the third day wandering around in the mountains, I met a peasant. I told him I wanted to join Castro’s rebels. He took me to somebody who took me to Castro. When I saw him I threw my arms around him, and he smiled, and said, ‘Why did you do this? Why did you want to join us?’ I told him my conscience said to me, ‘Marcelina, you must go and help the rebels. I heeded my conscience.’” At first she was given work teaching the peasants who harbored the rebels, to read and write. She set up classes. Then she became a nurse. And a courier to the city from time to time. She learned to handle a gun, and fought in battles. Now she said, with some effort to contain her pride, “I am a Lieutenant in the rebel army. Now the war was won, I am going back to my family. But I shall always be a rebel. We will never let Batista or anybody like him come back.”

This was the picture I got on my first visit to Cuba. Untrammelled terror; a national economy running downhill; hunger; 700,000 unemployed; disease; running counter to this, a people who had united against a despot; the splendid *elan* of the Resistance which bred a national heroism; unswerving devotion and endless, patient, minute

organization underground; thousands writing and distributing leaflets; a nation fighting, a people dreaming. A program for the future.

But across the water, from Miami to the Golden Gate, the newspapers in the States were hammering away, day in and day out, about a new despotism arising in Cuba; the U.S. government was harboring Batista war criminals like Masferrer, who had a villa in Miami; the U.S. government threatening reprisals—economic, political—and worse. Military intervention. Invasion.

No wonder Cubans say, "Poor Cuba, so far from God and so near the United States."

VIII. I RETURN A YEAR LATER

I FLEW BACK TO Cuba about a year later, as 1959 was ending and 1960 beginning. Cubans had called 1959 "The Year of Liberation." 1960 was dubbed, "The Year of Agrarian Reform." Naturally, in this dominantly rural land, if one wanted to get at the heart of the matter, one needed to look into the farmside and I determined to try to do that at my earliest.

During the year that passed, and since, I kept a close eye on developments in Cuba, and Latin America generally. I had been in Central Park in March 1959 when Premier Castro visited our land, after changes had taken place in his Cabinet. The first president, Manuel Uruttia, had resigned after his differences with the government's course had become intolerable. He evidently represented that force within the original revolutionary, anti-Batista front that wanted to rid the nation of Batista and his dictatorship, but whose class interests obscured the need for a dynamic popular policy that would accord greater economic benefits to the general mass of the people, i.e., the relentless prosecution of land reform. Uruttia

could not, evidently, see that the national welfare of all revolutionary sectors depended on the swift distribution of the nation's wealth, primarily the expropriation of its enormous fertility from the profiteers—the absentee landlords, whose sole interest—from their palaces in Buenos Aires, New York or Paris, was the fat dividend.

Prey to the Wall Street type propaganda of anti-Communism, Uruttia regarded the big social and economic advances as “capitulation to Communism.” Other individuals responded similarly to this revolutionary process.

Premier Castro came to America, and his tour was welcomed by lovers of freedom throughout our land.

Central Park, in New York, the night Castro spoke there was festooned with bright lights. I saw forty thousand New Yorkers—an astounding number considering the level of American political development—turn out, in the late night, to welcome him. They came with banners hailing the new Cuba, and their support of it. They were, in their majority, New Yorkers of Latin American origin. The thirty thousand-odd Cubans of the city, the masses from our metropolis's Puerto Rican immigrants who now numbered well over half a million, the refugees from the San Domingo republic which was now usurped by the dictator Trujillo; the Negro people of our city who were discovering, for the first time that Cuba's population is more than fifty percent non-white. I saw many young New Yorkers of other origins, and Castro's speech pleading for friendship and peace pleased them.

It did not look bad, this visit; it seemed that perhaps the U.S. government, realizing that an enormous reservoir of good will existed here, and abroad, for the new Cuba, would reject a policy of hostility toward Castro's Cuba. Perhaps it would, considering all expediencies, curb the most rabid in our land, the sugar monopolists, the jingoes. These solely understood a foreign policy based upon “positions of strength,” which meant settling differences by “sending the Marines”—as we had done several

scores of times in the past—to Haiti, to Cuba, to San Domingo, to Mexico, to Nicaragua. . . .

There were, of course, plenty of signs that these jingoes held positions of decisive influence in the State Department. The Batista emigres were generously allowed to settle in Florida. By using their ill-gotten gains, the moneys stolen from the Cuban people, they carried on nefarious activities. Masferrer, the head of the "Tigers"—that band of mercenary killers—was comfortably ensconced in Miami. He enjoyed ample police protection. Allowed to plot and to send who knows how many emissaries into Cuba to sabotage.

Worst of all, planes based on Florida soil took off on piratical forays to bomb the Cuban sovereignty: to drop explosives on the sugar fields, to seek to destroy the big sugar manufacturing plants—some 161 of them—to start big fires within the great expanses of the sugar-cane fields; to murder men, women and children.

Propaganda continued to rise against the new Cuba; anti-Communist weapons were brandished more fiercely than before.

By this time—late autumn of 1959—men like Lyle C. Wilson, vice-president of United Press International, wrote that Communists, most likely, would come to the helm in Cuba. He predicted that "the United States would promptly apply force to prevent the Reds from getting a foothold in the island Republic." After all, we could not "tolerate Communism in our backyard."

The Hearst press wrote, typically, in the same period: "Washington: The United States must immediately lead a movement by the Organization of American States and the U.N. for the replacement of the Communist-dominated Castro regime in Cuba. Otherwise within six or eight months, many other Latin American nations will follow the Castro pattern and confiscate all American property."

Authority for this statement was Portuondo, the Cu-

ban turncoat, Batista's former representative to the United Nations, who was now living comfortably in Trujillo's capital. The story, of course, carried no word about his past; but many words about his "revelations" that a plot engineered by Moscow and Peking sought to "communize" Cuba.

I arrived in Cuba the second time in a year, several months after the Camp David spirit seemed to be official U.S. policy. That policy referred primarily to the menace of world war and the mutual devastation by nuclear weapons. If Wall Street was obliged to accept such a course, it did not necessarily mean that American imperialists would draw their horns in about our Latin American "preserves." There Big Business had its most lucrative investments and there, with its threat of force, its ability to throw cash and credits around, it bought up big sections of the ruling national capitalists. It is timely, here, to quote Herbert Matthews, in the *New York Times*:

"About one-quarter of all our exports go to Latin America and one-third of our imports came from the area. United States private investments in Latin America now reach the amazing total of about \$9.5 billion. . . . At every side it is said: 'If we did not have Latin America on our side, our situation would be desperate. To be denied the products and markets of Latin America would reduce the United States to being a second-rate nation and cause a devastating reduction in our standard of living.'" Matthews said the raw materials of the lands south of our Rio Grande "are essential to our existence as a world power. A friendly Latin America is necessary to our military security."

The Camp David spirit might possibly indicate that sections of imperialism would make attempts to solve these problems by other ways than brute force. Might a new Good Neighbor policy emerge? Possibly, since our people welcomed the agreements at Camp David so

heartily. Perhaps the reins could be kept on the military who slavered to get going; who itched to use our new weapons, our Honest Johns and all the other new-fangled implements on Cuba and other Latin American lands, to subjugate them finally to a passive acceptance of all American designs.

IX. A TRIP TO THE FUTURE

AS SOON AS I came back to Cuba once again, I made a beeline for the countryside to see the Agrarian Reform, the essential core of the new Cuba around which all the other phenomena of the Revolution centered. How had the peasants fared in this year? I wanted to see it with my own eyes and the Cubans were eager to show it.

New friends I made in Cuba drove me out to a cooperative farm in the Southern region of Havana province, some 70 miles from the capital. En route, we passed through a land of astounding loveliness—the azure skies overhead, the palm-lined horizon stretching before you endlessly. Twenty miles out of Havana I saw new villages of delicately tinted cottages—light brown, light green, light blue, now and then one of the small, wiry Cuban horses grazing in the adjacent fields.

The farther south we rode the older the homes appeared, and soon we were in the region where I saw the dark ancient straw-thatched bohios, the one-roomed, earthen-floor huts standing desolately in the fields, where the entire family had lived, sharing the quarters with the livestock.

We were met at the cooperative's gates—amid great clusters of brilliant red flowers that seemed to stand guard—by the young captain in charge. A sturdy man of middle height, he wore the green olive drab of the army; his brown mane of hair curled below his shoulders, and a

rich, red-brown beard reached almost to his waistline. "Capt. Roberto Palma," he said, "I awaited your coming."

He stood by a jeep on the hood of which sat a sentry, lean and sun-burned, a guard evidently, his old campaigner's carbine slung around his shoulders, his eyes veiled with caution. Clearly he was the symbol of the Revolution, the living sign of its authority, set to protect this young captain from whatever hidden dangers lurked in the swiftly-changing countryside.

There was every reason for me to believe that all dangers had not been laid low. I had read amply of the efforts by concealed enemies of the Revolution to stir up counter-revolution: the American press was busy expanding and exploding stories to that effect almost daily.

You would not get any of that facet of today's life from the bright-eyed captain who took us to a patio-surrounded old style Spanish manse where he had his headquarters. The porch was crowded with men and women, children, a few stray dogs, and many evidently brought their various problems to the captain's staff. He outlined the scope of the region entrusted to his leadership.

"Cuba, today," the captain said to me over the inevitable small cups of powerful coffee sweetened with the sacred sugar of Cuba, "is apportioned into some 27 regions of the land reform."

He told me, and I learned more later, that these were operating under the authority of the central agency—INRA—the four, magic letters which mean the National Institute of Agrarian Reform, which the premier, Fidel Castro himself, headed as chairman, and which was managed, centrally, by Dr. Nunez Jiminez, its executive secretary.

Each of the twenty-seven regions, Captain Palma said, had its core of leaders—he, as I understood, was the top authority of this particular zone. He had chosen a committee that worked with him; two agronomists, experts in sugar culture as well as in the precious vegetables that

Cuba was now planting profusely throughout the island to diversify the agriculture.

His zone, No. 7, contained two large cooperatives, four villages, and the rest were hundreds of individual farmers. The land on which we were now standing, he said, was a four-thousand acre plantation previously owned by Batista's notorious "Minister of the National Lottery."

When that dignitary fled, January 1, 1959, the new government took over his farm, and like all other similar large holdings once belonging to the enemy, it was transformed into a cooperative. That was governmental policy from the outset.

The four thousand acres here, he said, were divided thus: three thousand went to the sugar cane, which stood higher, I saw, than twelve feet and would be ready for cutting soon. An additional thousand acres, which had lain fallow, was now planted to tomatoes, onions, cucumbers—precious vegetables which the peasants hitherto were forbidden to plant, for everything—the semi-feudal authorities had ordered—was to go to sugar—the money crop. The necessities for a sufficient and balanced diet—the garden vegetables—had, perforce, been imported from the United States, the agronomist explained when the young captain turned to him to join the conversation.

This agronomist—about thirty, of scholarly mien—in a leather windbreaker, bare-headed, carried a thick book under-arm, and he spoke deliberately, albeit eagerly, explaining all that I asked.

"What I want to tell you can best be understood if we stand at the point of green truth," he smiled. What he wanted to show me we saw a few moments afterward, conveyed there in the lurching jeep, on which the ever-present, sharp-eyed sentry sat, the young captain at the wheel, the agronomist talking with a controlled passion.

There, several hundred yards from the old *hacienda* with its tiled floors, was a great expanse of freshly tilled earth on which some sixty youngsters in sombreroes were

working with hoes. Long rows of small tender shoots were visible, row on row, for what seemed to be a limitless expanse. "They have planted tomatoes!" the agronomist said, happily, almost breathlessly, saying it, perhaps, like Madame Curie had spoken when she uncovered the properties of radium.

We descended from the jeep and the young agronomist continued in his restrained enthusiasm. "Tomatoes," he said, again. Hundreds of the acres were going to that plant, the others primarily to cucumbers. But he got onto the tomato, and pulled the book from under-arm to show me some dozen brands of tomatoes from which he had chosen the primary type to plant here.

It seems that "the Magruder tomato" was the best of all, he explained, singling it out from the other eleven on the page.

To my layman's eye all the engravings of tomatoes on the page looked alike, a tomato, to me, was a tomato. I could scarcely tell any difference. But the agronomist pointed out the lovely qualities of the Magruder; how hardy it was, how fast it grew, and, as I understood him, it could be used for a variety of purposes.

Those sprouting from the topmost branches of the plant were to be eaten first, were to be sold as produce on the marketplace or to be canned. They ripened first because they faced the sun most directly; the yield on the branches just below would not be as ripe, when picked, as the layer above them. They were for export.

Most important was that top layer (I hope I understood my agronomist's Spanish correctly)—which would be mashed and squeezed and made into pulp—for tomato soup and for puree.

He spoke of all these possibilities with such an air of cheer that Captain Palma, who had stood silent to this moment, his eyes twinkling as he listened, leaned over and said, with that brilliant smile, "Why, Tomaso, you talk about a tomato with such passion that one might

think a tomato was a beautiful woman, like Marilyn Monroe."

The agronomist stared at him, but, so wrapped up was he in his subject that he replied seriously, without humor: "Marilyn Monroe?" he repeated. "Oh, yes, the actress. Of course, she has her beauty and her undoubted gifts. But the Magruder can be exported, canned, or eaten. A greater asset."

The young captain laughed, swept an arm over the agronomist's shoulder, cuffing him on the head. "Eh, hombrel!" he said, "you and your sweetheart, the Magruder." One could only warm to the affectionate respect with which he heeded the agronomist, and turning to me explained, "He lives, sleeps and dreams of the Magruder. And he sleeps very little."

The young agronomist had won his diploma from the University of Havana some eight years ago. But Batista's Cuba had little work for trained agronomists; they shared the vast general unemployment, and this man had worked as a shoe salesman in a Havana department store, hoping that some day his talents, his training would be of use. Now they were of use.

He was clearly terribly grateful for the opportunity to be himself, an agronomist, and use his knowledge for the people; the day had not enough hours for him.

He, and his associates on the Zone No. 7's top committee, worked day and night with an enthusiasm that only the spirit of the *campecinos* themselves could match, the captain indicated.

They guided me to a low, long, newly-constructed building and entering, I saw some sixty men and women working, laying a cement floor around a big central trough, like a giant bathtub, so to speak, of concrete, where the tomatoes were to be ground into the pulp for soup, or for puree. And here they would can the product—for the home market and for export, the agronomist explained. Lean, wiry, sun-tanned women and men were

working with an absorption, a concentration that scarcely noted the entrance of our group.

X. "WE FEAR NOTHING AND NOBODY"

CAPTAIN PALMA SIGNALLED to a lean, Indian-looking man from the group, and he came over, surveying me directly, waiting. He still wore the olive drab of the rebel army. "Tell the *companero*, our friend," the captain bade him, "who you are, whence you came, and what you are doing, if you please." The veteran shrugged his shoulders. "*Como no?* Why not?" he replied tersely, giving his name, and the number of the regiment in which he had fought.

He had been a farm laborer all his life—some thirty-six years—when the Revolution came and he had joined it. He had worked on one of the big plantations belonging to United Fruit, before, as his father had done. He could have had his sixty-six acres, but he preferred to join the cooperative and he brought his wife and six children from the village in Oriente where he had been born.

He had asked to be relieved from the Army, and be sent to this cooperative farmside to begin work at once. Permission granted, he had come at once, eager to get at a peacetime pursuit. Now he was busily at work, as he had been busy, the past three years, toting rifle and grenade into many battles for his country's freedom—and for this, which was unfolding here.

He got a governmental stipend of two and a half pesos a day, he said; this would continue daily until the cooperative got on its feet. He, a peasant born and bred in the one-roomed *bohios*, was already living in a three-roomed cement constructed home—built on the premises by workers from a nearby village who came, on Saturdays and Sundays, to aid their new neighbors on the cooperative farm.

There was a business-like air about the peasant-soldier, a glow to his eye, like someone engaged in a mission with full and confident dedication. There was that same air in others to whom I spoke, and it was easy to divine what depths the Revolution had struck within them. It was theirs, this Revolution; nobody would cheat them of it.

One of the slogans I saw on a big red strip of cloth that hung across a pathway said, "*We fear nothing and nobody.*" I believe it. This peasant looked the part. Lean, brown, wiry, he had gladly withstood hardships in the remote and wild Maestras, his words conveyed, and the job of building the new Cuba posed no mysteries or terrors. It simply had to be done, and, after answering my questions, he glanced toward the captain, as though to get the nod of permission to return to his work. The others had looked up briefly, noted the stranger in their midst, saw that the Captain was with me, and continued at their labors. Women were working with a vim equal to that of the men; the cement floor was being completed with enthusiastic dispatch.

The building that was to be the cannery faced a big courtyard which we entered, and I saw some thirty-odd brand new tractors, the bright yellow and red of the paint still on them. "Just arrived," the Captain called out cheerfully. They came from various lands, wherever the new government could wangle credits. Some came from the Caterpillar works in Peoria, Illinois, most others were from Britain, West Germany and Czechoslovakia.

These tractors, the captain explained, were stationed here—centrally—and the plan for their use was determined centrally—based upon the requests and needs of the peasants and the two big cooperative farms of the Zone.

It struck me that I was seeing a planned society in its bud; what peasant—on his own individual acres—could afford to buy a tractor or even to rent the use of one on a

"free, private enterprise" basis. These were here as a result of the government's welcome intervention into the scene through INRA—through its promotion and organization of land reform.

It was inspiring to see a new society being born, on terms not unfamiliar to the Twentieth Century—through revolution against tyranny in which the aspiration for economic independence was inextricably laced.

Freedom, and land, and bread. The latter half of the Twentieth Century, I noted, was unlike the first half when, in 1910, the Mexican Revolution had unfolded.

This latter half century had the advantages of a socialist precedence. Although the Cuban Revolution was no socialist revolution—it was unfolding within the confines of the capitalist order, still, its dynamic was toward a genuine and far-reaching land reform. This involved breaking the power of the latifundists and the big imperialist grab. That process unleashed vast native powers of imaginative initiative directed and organized by the state. The new Cuba would not balk at utilizing any experience gained by the socialist countries—and their basic tenet of organization—*planfulness*.

So here, on this cooperative, on Zone 7, in Cuba, I could see reason prevailing over the age-old greedy chaos of private property. There in that courtyard, among these peasants, now owners of their own big, united farm, you saw the Plan, the conscious, organized Plan of human liberation, being born in Latin America.

They guided me to another, nearby building, newly painted in bright yellow, with a banner above it of welcome. Inside it was a counter on which stood canned foods, shelves behind that counter, stocked with tins of various foodstuffs, all was bright, and shining new. It was a store, a small store, true, but the Captain, and the man behind the counter, and the entire entourage, glowed with a pride that is contagious.

"This is a cooperative store," the Captain explained.

Encouraged by INRA, planned by it, the store was set up by the workers on this farm to purchase edible necessities at wholesale prices, as cheap as possible. They were to sell to the cooperators at cost, adding only the expenses of maintenance. I checked the prices here of *bacalao*, a dried codfish, beans, with prices in a store later in the village ten miles away. The cooperative's prices ranged from ten to twenty percent cheaper.

"But mind you," the Captain said, "we did not set our store up to compete with the private enterprises of the village. Only the families working on this farm are allowed to purchase here—nobody from the village may come to buy at the price we sell. For we do not wish to bankrupt the individual storekeeper of the town."

Since this was written the government has issued statistics which show that the People's Stores numbered—by mid-spring of 1960—some 15 months after the Revolution—about 1,400. They had been planned, and organized by INRA, which is now the biggest retail agency in the land.

I asked Captain Palma further questions about national production, the state of affairs of the Agrarian Reform generally. He advised me to look up the central INRA offices in Havana, where they had whatever latest figures were available.

He could, however, say this: INRA, and he said it with a bright vim, is not only directing the dispensation of land and its scientific and planned cultivation, nor is it only setting up cooperative consumption; it was doing more. "Building roads," he said, "and more important perhaps than anything else, building schools for our children. We now have libraries in the countryside for them and their parents; education is wiping out the enormous illiteracy the old way of life had condemned us to."

I saw new schoolhouses going up throughout the region; as well as newly paved roads that had the INRA's symbol on them. Half a mile from the big farm I went

into a new, clean medical center where two nurses bustled by in white, and a doctor was in charge—that was also the work of INRA. "We are putting them up all over the country," the Captain said.

As we were about to return to Havana, to get the all-over figures, I encountered several farmers carrying a large winding of electric wire, and I asked its purpose. "Hombre," one replied, "we are stringing up electric lights for our work. There is so much to do, we want to get so much done, that the sun doesn't shine long enough in the day. We are putting electric lights up so we can work at nights, too."

They were changing night into day, these Cubans.

XI. THE NEGRO IN CUBA

AS AN AMERICAN OF TODAY, I am acutely conscious of the question of race—in the United States it is a primary matter affecting the lives of every white as well as of every Negro.

I looked into this phase of Cuban life when I discovered what many do not yet know, that more than half of its populace is not white. The Conquistadores, after slaughtering the original dwellers of Cuba—the Siboney Indians—found themselves without the labor power to cultivate this wonderfully fertile isle.

A slave traffic instantly developed wherein African Negroes, by the hundreds of thousands, were brought in chains to the New World, to work this land. Unlike slavery's course in the United States, the men and women of Africa remained, by and large, in the regions to which they were brought—primarily in Oriente—the green, royal-palm land of the eastern sector, through which the wild Sierra Maestras run. So many rebellions and uprisings

took place through the four centuries that the Cuban maxim arose: "All revolutions begin in Oriente." And it was there that Castro landed his "Gamma" that began the military phase of this Revolution.

Among the plain people, the peasants, the workers, racism did not exist; and after chattel slavery ended, there was a free intermixture in marriage. One of Cuba's greatest heroes—the military genius Maceo, was a Negro; today, I discovered in the new Cuba, that the head of the air-force was a Negro; the head of the army, a Negro; the chief of the Oriente contingents of the armed forces, a Negro. Racism was scarcely a reality here, although seeds of it remained among the gentry of the land before the Revolution, and more were sowed by the new Conquistadores, the lords of the Yankee dollar, whose enterprises on the island, discriminated against the Negro. Once again, the phrase so common in the United States—"The Negro is the last to be hired and the first to be fired—was heard once again, this time in Spanish. Furthermore, the dictator Batista sought to atomize the population, to maintain power by the old precept of divide and rule. He deliberately wooed the poverty-stricken, jobless sons of the black Cubans to come into his army. Consciously he raised some of them to higher officers in his echelons. The rebels were aware of his intentions, and warned the people. Many heroic Negroes rose to officer rank among the rebels. Prejudice against the Negro failed to gain roots.

It was no accident that a contingent of some 72 leading American Negroes were personal guests of Premier Castro and the Cuban government New Year's Day of 1960. The group included such prominent figures as the publisher of the leading Negro newspaper, the *Chicago Defender*, and others like Joe Louis, the former heavyweight champion of the world. In fact he later sent a message to his people in the States informing them that only in Cuba could Americans find complete equality

if they came for a vacation. For they are barred, by and large, from most North American resorts. The fact was not lost upon the Negro people, who feel a natural kinship with the inhabitants of the neighboring land.

All this, of course, won no favor for Cuba among the political big-wigs of our Southern states, who long back, even before the Civil War, favored annexing Cuba, and making it a slave state to enhance the power of the South in the halls of Congress.

On our way back to Havana, my friends stopped the car at the busy town of Guines, about forty kilometers from the capital. Dusk was falling and the workers—from nearby mills—were strolling on the central plaza with its ancient, winding streets so reminiscent of old Spain that I remembered from my days covering the war against Franco.

In fact so much of Cuba reminded me of those days: the old towns certainly, the Spanish of the inhabitants, but above all else, the enthusiasm for a sacred cause that I remembered so fondly in Republican Spain.

My friends indicated why they had stopped here. "We want you to meet a man that should be known far and wide." They found the man in his home, at the dinner table. He was a Negro of medium height, with a wide chest, a big scar across his cheek, and there was an air of rugged strength about him.

"Ah, a Norteamericano," he said, extending his hand. "It is good to meet friends from los Estados Unidos," he added, surveying me with a pair of humorous eyes. "It is good to know that not all of you think as your government thinks."

I assured him there were many differences and that, if our people really knew the truth about Cuba, they would, overwhelmingly, support the new here, and oblige our government to do likewise. "Naturally," he said, "I am therefore doubly glad to meet you; I know from my newspaper that your government has no good in store for

us." My friends urged him to tell me his story, and smiling, he said, of course he would.

This was his story. My other companions, young they were, in their mid-twenties, listened raptly, although they knew it.

He had been a revolutionary worker all his years since he came of age, he said. "My name is Pedro," he said, "and as far back as I can remember, they called me 'Red Pedro.' It was because I believed in what I believed, and I guess I harangued everybody whose ear I could get. I believed we should be free of foreign domination. There was only one way to do so, struggle in every way possible, for our freedom: by ballot, by strike, by Revolution. So they called me Red. I had no objection. It is a good color."

He had spoken his piece in the time of the Butcher Gerardo Machado, and later, against Batista when the sergeant became an instrument of the foreign oppressors. "So, when Batista came back, in the year of 1953, there was no use my concealing my views to gain my safety, everybody knew my views."

One day a carload of Batista's secret police swept into Guines, and parked across the street from his home. On his return from work they burst into his home, and hauled him to the local police headquarters.

There they beat him with billiard cues until he lost consciousness; next he knew he was lying in the courtyard outside his home. Half conscious, he saw an automobile's wheels headed toward him as he was lying prone, chest upward, aching in every bone of his body. Before he could twist away, the automobile was upon him, the wheels passed over his chest.

The next thing he remembered was lying in a bed of a friend. After running the car over his chest Batista's political police had departed, certain that they had finished with Pedro the Red. "But I fooled them," he laughed. "God gave Pedro a good frame, indestructible,

I believe, or at least so my friends and neighbors feel." He had regained consciousness, and lay, alive, in the courtyard.

Friends carried him off, certain that death would come in a matter of minutes. "I decided I could not afford to die at such a moment." He survived.

Nobody believed he could, but he did. And he recovered after some months, but his friends insisted that he remain underground for surely he would be killed if they knew in Havana, that he had foiled his tormentors by holding on to life. He had worked in the underground until victory; distributing the newspapers, the leaflets, the works of freedom.

When Fidel Castro and his boys came down from the Sierra Maestras, and fought that big battle at Santa Clara which decided the war finally, he had been there to help them. He and other trade-unionists whom he had persuaded to be on hand to give the rebels whatever aid they need. There he met the men of his long-time dream, the rebels. "And there," he laughed, "I recovered from my wounds entirely." He had had aches and pains since that car went over his chest; "but now my aches and pains are gone."

"Now," he said, "I go into the fields among my friends and relatives, the peasants, and I see what Land Reform is accomplishing. The Agrarian Reform is like the car which they rolled over my chest; but now we are rolling the car over them," he laughed, delightedly. "The only difference between us is that I survived and they won't."

XII. THE COOPERATIVES CAME FAST

THE INSTITUTE OF LAND REFORM can be found in a large, multi-story building a block long in Havana. Here the men and women of young Cuba work, helping to cast the social and political magic that was transforming the countryside. And from here—to the best of the statistics they have already gathered—one got the following picture—one, it must be registered, that is changing daily along the lines of the slogan: "The Revolution must be made more revolutionary." In other words, the figures here of land granted, of tractors working, of cooperatives formed, are growing constantly.

The figures below are for somewhere about May Day, 1960—when a million and a half Cubanos came again into the square before the presidential palace to acclaim their freedom and the swift expansion of their economy.

By May Day 1960 some 2,640,000 acres of sugar-cane land was being run by some 200,000 sugar workers in one thousand cooperatives—of larger and smaller size than the one I described in the previous chapter.

By the end of this year the experts feel fairly sure that the agrarian reform will fundamentally be completed. It has priority over everything else. If 1959 was the Year of Liberation, 1960 was indeed the year of the Land Reform. It is a good calendar.

Estimates run that the first six months of the full Land Reform law—about June to December, 1959—INRA had taken control of about 4,500,000 acres. By April of 1960 the figures jumped to some 7,500,000 acres. This is about one-third of the country's entire land capable of cultivation. And the giant of INRA was still marching on with seven-league boots.

It was smashing the ancient feudalistic chains, and in this astonishingly short time since January 1, 1959 the land was going to the peasants—the Government expro-

priating, as is its inalienable right, the holdings of foreign corporations and native exploiters, turning these over to the people's good and the national welfare.

Everywhere you saw this truth—that big cooperatives were arising even as the individual peasants were working their newly won lands with the aid and solicitous care of the new government. Cooperatives in a land where the peasant hungered, traditionally, for his own patch of land. How come? The answer I heard was along the following lines: Remember, I was told, the countryside primarily given to sugar cane, was featured, in the past, by the fact that it was worked mainly by land laborers who got wages. There were some 500,000 of these, who belonged to the big sugar-workers' union. Their outlook was determined in considerable part by this fact: they were rural proletarians more than they were peasants with the ancient petty-bourgeois outlook of "every man for himself" and "let me alone on my sacred acres." They could more readily, therefore, understand the advantages of working cooperatively, with more up-to-date machinery, than small, peasant landholders. Hence, they were like the soldier-farmer I had met on the cooperative in Zone 7, who chose to come to work on the big farm rather than to stake out a claim for his sixty-six acres personally. He could more readily, evidently, see the advantage in being part of a large enterprise where tractors were made available, where a sense of security and strength one gets in numbers reigned.

The matters of diversifying the crop, and planfulness, and finding markets—breaking away from the stranglehold of the single U.S. dominated market—were more readily apparent to him.

He had sweated and bent his back for United Fruit and he knew its might. And that of the other big corporations that stretched here from Wall Street—the capital of Yankee imperialism. He had no illusions about

any of that. Working cooperatively—with the state's administration—made good sense to him.

Here Wall Street was tangible, and immediate and evil reality. Perhaps a flashback to my first visit to Cuba, in 1940, is in order to illustrate how well he knew. I came to Manzanillo, on the Caribbean, then, a town lovely among the royal palm trees, gleaming whitely on the shoreline of a brilliantly blue sea.

A few feet from the railroad station I stood on the curb as a procession of black-clad men and women passed. I was seeing a slow, sorrowful funeral march; the marchers were bearing high a small white coffin in which the corpse of a six-year-old child lay. Several women in the procession noted me, clearly a Yankee, and they said something to one another angrily, averting their faces. Later that day I spoke to the newly elected mayor of the town—a workingman who greeted me as a "Norteamericano who was not from Wall Street." I mentioned the funeral procession to him in the course of our talk and the anger I thought I felt the people had, as they glanced at me, the man from the States. He explained: that child in the white coffin, he said, was dead because of Americans. "The story is bitter, and perhaps strange to you, a story of water. Water is a war cry, here, water is death. Water, here, is Yankee imperialism."

This is the story he told me. The great Wall Street firm, American and Foreign Power Corporation, controlled 90 per cent of all Cuba's electric power through its subsidiary, the *Compania Cubana de Electricidad*. Here, in Oriente, it controlled Manzanillo's reservoir of water. "It dominated Manzanillo by virtue of a lease granted it by an administration of ancient landowners—the Ramirez Leon family. The Yankee company raised the water tax so steeply that none of the region's sixty thousand inhabitants—almost all were then unemployed—could pay." Three of every four breadwinners were jobless, penniless. Condemned to seek their own water, all Man-

zanillo could be seen "like aborigines, marching in processions every morning at dawn to the wells and to the springs carrying pails and pitchers. The water became contaminated by typhoid. Death took its toll. Hence we see those endless processions that march every day to the cemeteries where they carry those who were condemned by the invader." Hundreds died, thousands were ill with the deadly fever.

Multiply this instance of Manzanillo by every community in Cuba, and you can readily see how the six and a quarter million-strong populace understands Wall Street. The press in the United States speaks endlessly of Fidel Castro "stirring up" the people, "haranguing" them into a "hatred" of Yankee imperialism. But that feeling was there long before Castro saw the day's light on his father's ranch in Oriente. It is not as *Newsweek* would have its readers believe (November 9, 1959): "The trouble is that they've been so brainwashed that whatever Castro says they automatically believe." Wrong. They have come to believe him because he speaks the truths—as the foremost governmental official—that they know in their bones, through decades of hardship and bloody experience.

XIII. THE CASTRO I HEARD

AS TO CASTRO HIMSELF; there is today in the Western hemisphere no statesman equal to his attainments, his experience, none that has his record. The tall, husky, bearded man with the great Latin eyes is the symbol of the Revolution; but he has shown himself to be more. Not only has he proven himself a gallant, dauntless, and sage military leader; he has shown a remarkable quality of political leadership and statecraft. Only journalists biased by their class blindness can ignore the unique qualities of the man.

I heard, with disgust, the sneers at his long speeches, the sort of assessment Republican Senator Capehart is capable of, who saw "the spectacle of a bearded monster stalking through Cuba." I have, in my two journeys to Cuba within a year heard Premier Castro a number of times. I heard him speak before a million as I described earlier in these pages. I heard him speak before workers' assemblies, and I saw that time and again, as he was about to stop, his voice giving way, and he obviously came near exhaustion, the audience insatiably clamored for more, and more. For he was describing a dream and a practical program to realize the dream. It may be well to tell in his words and a paraphrase of them for space reasons, that he delivered to the members of the Cuban Confederation of Workers. Thus I have heard him speak; thus the millions of Cuba have heard him speak, and in these words he supplies as succinct a picture of Cuba's needs and goals as I have seen. Essentially Castro herein lays low the argument—stemming from Wall Street "logic" but finding its reflection among certain recently high-placed Cubans—that the nation's problem, its chronic unemployment to date—can only be solved by inviting foreign capital. It is an argument that one hears in the press and from the politicians down the hemisphere, men like those who today run the governments of Argentina, of Chile, of other Latin lands—all who are controlled by the Yankee dollar and who tell their people there is no solution save recourse to the pocketbook, "the investments" of the rich uncle of the North.

As we have seen, the new Cuba inherited monstrous economic problems bred by decades of imperialist oppression. One is a vast, chronic unemployment. The land is estimated to have a total labor force of nearly two and a quarter million. In 1957 some 361,000 were wholly jobless; another 150,000 worked part-time; another 150,000 were domestics, or itinerant workers glad to get their meals and shelter. As Robert Tabor points out in the *Nation*

(January, 1960): Of some 1,600,000 gainfully employed almost a million earned less than \$75 a month "in a nation where the peso was on a par with the dollar and had even less purchasing power in Havana than in New York."

The corrupt and inefficient government of Batista—hogtied by the Yankee overlords, had allowed an unfavorable balance of trade with the United States to run the nation's gold and dollar reserves down to \$110,000 by the end of December 1958.

When I arrived in January 1959, a few days after Castro marched into Havana at the head of his victorious troops, aided by a general four-day strike of all Cuban labor, there was no money to pay the troops or the government employees and draconic economic measures were put into motion and they worked. But the chronic problem of joblessness remained. And here is what Castro told the union workers. "Immediately after January 1, our people were confronted with a formidable problem. The prevailing sentiment was one of rejoicing—at long last we had broken the fetters of oppression, injustice and crime that had doomed our people to humiliation and poverty, and more important, deprived them of hope." But the revolution had not yet "taken shape and form." It was a great hope, but the outlines of the future were not yet clear. "One of the most difficult, and decisive, tasks of the revolution was, and still is, elimination of poverty, misery, our economic weakness, or reduced to its essentials, the fight against unemployment. It would have been hardly possible to inherit a weaker economic structure." But now the people—"no longer deprived of any say in the affairs of state"—were advancing to a solution to this problem.

It was not, nor will it be, easy. "Working people's incomes rose as we restored and granted their legitimate rights." Incomes rose as the government increased employment, extending the public works program, brought more and more land under cultivation and put more people to work in industry. "In particular, incomes rose as

we eliminated smuggling and started a mass movement to get people to buy Cuban goods: as we reopened factories, increased the number of workers at operating factories and shifted these from a one-or-two-day week to a full week as was the case in the textile industry." In short, incomes rose as the government "activated the country's economic life."

But this does not solve the over-all economic problem. It cannot be done by "decreeing increased incomes," for were that the case, the difficulties would have been overcome more than a year before.

Castro pointed out that the growth of income has its limit, its definite ceiling, determined by the general level of national production. Production requires the creation of industry, and that, in turn, requires "what is commonly known as 'capital,' or, in plain language, the money needed to buy equipment and hire workers, without which the national resources cannot be developed."

Then the Premier made an explanation which could well be studied down the length of the hemisphere. Some maintain it would "be wise to invite foreign capital. But if we were to take that course, we would find ourselves in this position: the capitalist who invests his money in another country does not do so out of generosity, he is not animated by a noble feeling of sympathy, or by a desire to help that country." Foreign private capital pursues its own selfish aim. "Surplus capital in one country is invested in another, where wages and living standards are lower and raw materials cheaper. This makes for bigger profit, and the foreign capitalist is always guided by the urge for more profit, not by any feeling of magnanimity."

And of course foreign capital is directed to those areas where it will earn the biggest profit. "Foreign investors set their own terms. And what are these terms?" You can see why Castro's words struck deep within the hearts and minds of his listeners. They had the barb of truth. These terms, he continued, include, "first, the uncon-

trolled right to fire workers, for they realize that the guaranteed and safeguarded right to work does not make for ideal investment conditions; if, at some given time, profits can be raised by dismissing workers, they want to be free to dismiss them. That is why their first demand is the right to discharge workers or shift them to lower-paid jobs. In other words, what are usually called guarantees for foreign private investments are shackling conditions for the workers." Obviously the capitalist's interests run counter to those of the workers.

So the speech—lucid, simple, heartfelt—goes and it is his characteristic. Castro spelled out the reasons the foreign capitalist drives for extra profits—to recompense his investments to cover interest payments . . . and so on.

No, the revolution could not take that path, it would have led the people back into colonial bondage and exploitation. And still some people insisted that the only way out was to guarantee private investments. "But foreign capitalists had these guarantees in Cuba for fifty years, and similar guarantees in practically every other country of the American continent. Did these guarantees solve the pressing problems confronting the peoples? Did they solve the problem of unemployment, education, public health? Did they bring the people prosperity? Indeed, what did they solve in all those fifty years?" He bade his audience of workers to regard the picture well: 661,000 unemployed in Cuba and widespread unemployment in every underdeveloped Latin American country.

Why, then should the revolution pin its hopes on policies that failed to solve a single problem in all these fifty years, on methods that are insulting and humiliating to the working people?

There are no half-way solutions. The path to success was difficult and arduous as the people are aware. As soon as the heady first days of freedom passed, the masses of Cubans realized that further sacrifices were

needed today to guarantee their welfare and that of their children tomorrow.

Then came the most remarkable voluntary efforts a Latin American people has ever made on behalf of its government. Instead of spending 100 percent of their earnings, Cuban workers are spending only 96 percent, contributing four percent each week buying long-term bonds to help develop Cuba's economy, to keep that economy in Cuban hands, to guarantee that the future will truly belong to them, not hang on the will of foreigners. "And the contributions are made on the initiative of the workers themselves, spontaneously, without any pressure from the government. This noble, spontaneous enthusiasm is something we can hold up to the world with a feeling of justifiable pride."

This contribution will help enable the government to industrialize the nation and "this generation will be rewarded for the sacrifices it now has to make." The workers must know how the money is being spent, what factories are being built. "Comrades have been working for some time on our first development plan," Castro said, describing it as "a modest industrialization plan drawn up by the revolutionary government indicating the industries singled out for new investment."

That program calls for a total investment of forty million pesos, made up by the moneys contributed by the laboring classes. That sum will go into agriculture, mining and textile. This is part of a much bigger plan for development in five branches of the economy—agriculture, chemicals, engineering, mining and textiles. The industrial development program envisaged by the National Institute of Agrarian Reform for the next twelve months requires an outlay of 151,846,00 pesos. This will make jobs for 12,770 workers. The new industries will be built in various parts of the country, depending on available raw material sources and economic needs.

The first modest industrialization plan, drawn up by

the revolutionary government, entails the expenditure of 98 million pesos in foreign exchange. That fund is now being built up by Ernesto Guevara, director of the Cuban National Bank, by "exercising stringent economy." So that if the shops sometimes lack certain luxury goods, the explanation is "that we are saving foreign exchange for industrialization."

This program is part of a bigger plan embracing such industries as oil refining and iron and steel—"we are going to build an iron and steel mill." These industries requiring large investments, will be designed and built out of the 100 million credit granted by the Soviet Union, not out of the 152 million pesos mentioned above. No wonder the American monopolistic press wrung its hands when the Cuban government announced its trade agreements with the U.S.S.R. during the visit by Anastas Mikoyan when the Soviet exhibit was shown to hundreds of thousands of admiring Cuban workers several months ago. The agreement to buy five million tons of sugar in the next five years at world market prices and to grant a credit of 100,000,000 dollars was a sign of the future—one of liberation from the ancient bondage to Wall Street imperialistic capital; one that would help the Cubans to achieve a basis to work out their own destiny as Castro outlined in his speech.

This agreement, which threw the Yankee exploiters of Cuba into unprecedented rage, provided the following: that twenty percent of the payment is to be in dollars, the rest in Soviet goods. Cuba will repay the Soviets' credit of \$100 million in twelve annual installments at 2½% interest. Cuba would be supplied goods that include wheat, iron, steel and oil products, aluminum, chemicals and various kinds of machinery.

Virtually the entire North American press denounced this agreement: Cuba "was falling into the maw" of "Soviet imperialism"; Cuba would forfeit the advantages of "the quota-bonus" system, under which purchases of Cu-

ban sugar is regulated. The fact is that the Soviet-Cuban treaty greatly helps Cuba to strike out on an independent economic policy, enabling her to deal with any nation to their mutual advantage. Shackles to big American sugar interests are being broken. Furthermore, the quota bonus system was never designed to help Cuba: it is merely a form of subsidy to the incompetent U.S. sugar industry. Quotas and premiums are not determined by consultation with Cuba, but in Wall Street and Washington. And finally the price bonus goes into the tills of the big American firms which owned nearly the whole of Cuba's sugar lands. No, the American press does not point out how helpful this agreement is to Cuba which will be able to dispose, to the USSR, about 40% of its surplus over the American market. Furthermore, it will be able to get farm and industrial equipment from the Soviet Union, its most pressing industrial and agrarian requirements.

XIV. WHY CUBA EXPROPRIATED

MUCH INK HAS FLOWED over many pages about Cuba's "unjust" treatment of the monopolies as it expropriated the big plantations and the foreign industries. It is necessary to consider this development which led many Americans astray in their understanding of the new Cuba. A glance back at pre-revolutionary Cuba is helpful.

The Agricultural Census in 1946 showed that more than a third of the nation's cultivable land was the property of some 900 great corporations.

- The total area of farmlands worked by family farmers owning 25 acres or less, totalled only a tenth as much as that held by the big landowners.
- U.S. corporations owned 40% of the sugar lands. Seven of the ten biggest plantations on the island

were American: Cuban Atlantic, Cuban American, American Sugar Refining, United Fruit, West Indies Sugar, Vertientes Camaguey, Manati Sugar.

- Cuban Atlantic alone owned over half a million acres.
- These vast sugar plantations took up 22% of all land in Oriente, the nation's most fertile province; 27% in Camaguey, 36% in Matanzas.
- The 3,000 square kilometers of the Isle of Pines belonged to four landlords.

Another word: the great American companies got their extensive holdings at prices akin to highway robbery. Back in 1905, for instance, the Nipe Bay Company, a predecessor of United Fruit, "bought" 122,000 acres of sugarcane land in Oriente, the most fertile of all Cuba's provinces, for \$100! (Guantanamo cost U.S. \$2,000!) Tax evasion, as well as graft to annul the workings of labor legislation was widespread. The big corporations amortized their original investments many years ago, and financed further expansion directly out of their current dividends. Samuel Shapiro's study in the *New Republic* (September 22, 1960), says, "During the years 1935-1957 the eight largest American sugar firms made an average net profit of 23 percent a year, most of which was sent to the U.S. in the form of interest and dividends."

Expropriation has moved at a quickened pace for historic reasons and necessities. As time passed, after the revolution, it became painfully clear that the big monopolies continued their plots to subvert the new system. This was certainly true of the oil corporations that arrogantly refused to refine the petroleum sent from the Soviet Union in the spring of 1960. The first that balked was Texas Oil which had a refinery at Santiago de Cuba. It was taken over by the government June 28, 1960. All the international oil cartels ganged up on the new regime.

Only one recourse remained, if the wheels of the revo-

lution were to keep turning. That was expropriation.

On July 1, 1960, the last two foreign oil refineries, their storage and facilities, were taken—Esso (Cuba), Inc., and Shell Petroleum of Cuba, owned by Canadian Shell, Ltd., of the Royal Dutch-Shell interests. Dr. Ernesto Guevara, now Cuban Minister of Economy, emphasized that under Cuba's Universal Fuel Act of 1938, the refiners were obligated to refine crude oil whatever its origin.

So it went, up and down the line. In the very first months after the revolution the Cuban government sent in "interventors"—government assessors—to examine the accounts of such monopolies as Cuban Bond and Share—the electric and power interest—International Telephone and Telegraph—and other major foreign concerns. Uncovering outrageously high rates of profit, the new government ordered drastic price cuts. Telephone calls dropped from a dime to a nickel. In a land whose living standard was one-sixth that of the United States, one can readily perceive the importance of that cut. Electric rates went down 40%; rents were cut 50% nationally. All this amounted to a wage raise—and the increased spending money went to Cuban storekeepers, Cuban industries, thereby increasing the national income, rather than allowing moneys to be sluiced away to foreign lands as in the past.

Naturally an anguished outcry rose from the foreign monopolies, mainly American. Radio broadcasts, TV programs, newspaper editorials, dripped vitriol against the new Cuban government.

But what the American people were not told about expropriation was this: that the Cuban government would pay in twenty-year bonds bearing 4½% interest, based on the current assessed valuation for tax purposes. The State Department contended that "there must be prior payment of the proper indemnification in cash, in the amount judicially determined."

XV. WHAT MacARTHUR DID IN JAPAN

THE STATE DEPARTMENT also failed to inform the public about the precedent established by General Douglas MacArthur in Japan after the end of World War II. Landowners whose holdings were expropriated were to be compensated in 24-year bonds paying $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent interest.

Moreover, the companies in Cuba which now complain so bitterly are mum about the years when they avoided payment of millions in taxes by underevaluation, which they engineered.

There is nothing in the stars or in international law which says that the Cuban government must enforce laws which previous regimes had adopted to benefit the foreign exploiters—against whom this Revolution was, in great part, directed. For Batista could never have reduced the country to the hardships it endured without the conniving support of the big American monopolists.

And so plantation after plantation, industry after industry, was expropriated in order to help the Cuban people, ravaged as they were, by unemployment and the unconscionably high prices charged by the foreign holders.

The mighty U.S. government bore down, demanding, blustering. Economic reprisals were taken against even the smallest measure Cuba took to guarantee her independence in the only way possible—to take over the foreign holdings.

Sugar—Cuba's dominant interest—saw the major reprisal. Early in August the U.S. Congress passed a bill which allowed President Eisenhower to set the sugar quota regulating purchase of sugar in Cuba, at any figure he wanted, until next March 31. Cuba, since the Sugar Act of 1948—was assigned some 3,200,000 tons a year sale to this country—about a third of total U.S. consumption. Needless to say this act was primarily passed to aid U.S. concerns owning the preponderance of Cuban sugar-lands and sugar mills, the *centrales*. Eisenhower understood

his powers by cutting the remaining Cuban quota for 1960 by a breath-taking 95%. This meant a slashing loss to Cuba of some \$92,500,000—about 700,000 tons. (Later, by October, the U.S. government announced it would buy NO sugar from Cuba in 1961.)

The historic development wherein the Soviet Union contracted to buy a million tons a year caused a furor in Washington; this grew when, several months later, People's China contracted for 500,000 tons annually. Other socialist countries signed similar contracts. Wall Street's stranglehold on the Cuban economy was being broken.

So matters continued until mid-October, 1960. "Last week," the *New York Times* wrote, Oct. 16, "Dr. Castro's Cabinet announced the most sweeping nationalization measures ever taken by a non-Communist government in this hemisphere."

Two decrees passed by the cabinet, the *Times* reported, proclaimed the nationalization of 382 Cuban and foreign-owned corporations with an estimated value of two billion dollars. The decree nationalized all but two banks, both Canadian, finished the nationalization of the sugar mills and gave the government control of 90% of the tobacco, coffee, mining and other key industries. About twenty U.S. firms were involved; most of the billion-dollar U.S. investment in Cuba "had been seized earlier," the *Times* said.

Hard on the heels of this announcement came another, which brought great joy to the plain man of Cuba—the property reform law. This forbade a private citizen or group from collecting more than \$600 a month in rents. It authorized tenants to claim ownership of their homes after paying rent for a period of time from five to twenty years. These developments came after the State Department declared it was on the eve of imposing an embargo on all U.S. exports to Cuba, except food and medicine. The total value was estimated at more than \$300,000,000 a year, or nearly half of Cuba's pre-revolutionary imports.

The *Times* said, "It would represent the toughest U.S. Act since last July's decision to cut off imports of Cuban sugar." The embargo was imposed in October. It is significant that Canada declared its intention to continue trade with Cuba—virtually every newspaper in that nation criticized Washington's program as "implacably hostile." That hostility expanded from economic warfare to the threat of armed attack.

While all this was happening, reports grew that an invasion was impending. I recalled the scene, when, on my last trip to Havana I walked the streets, talking to the *Habaneros*. I encountered a procession which was led by an automobile towing a small fighter plane, bearing the Cuban flag. A bearded soldier blew a bugle, and it halted near the midst of a crowd. Several pretty, young *Cubanas*, in military uniform, passed among the pedestrians for contributions to the government to enable it to buy the means to defend itself. Men, women, children pressed forward to put coins, pesos into their hands.

I saw youngsters marching in military formation—students, proletarians, even members of the theater, actors and actresses, were drilling, learning to use guns should that become necessary. When I was out in the midst of the canebreaks—the sugar-cane regions—I saw the young of the countryside drilling, marching near their precious crops.

It is not hard for them to realize why the United States State Department has forbidden American firms to sell the new Cuba any means for defense. Especially when one recalls that this government which had sold, or given Batista hundreds of millions of dollars worth of death-dealing instruments, clamped an embargo of arms upon the new state. The pretext is that the ban on arms to "all" Caribbean lands will "bring peace" to that region. But it is common knowledge that cut-throat mercenaries—hired by the millions of dollars received from U.S. official sources by such dictators as Trujillo, on nearby San-

Domingo, are drilling for invasion, and that several airborne efforts to invade the new Cuba have already been made, frustrated by the vigilance of the revolutionary Cuban people.

Hence, when the ship bearing a cargo of small arms, hand-grenades, and other similar weapons blew up in the harbor of Havana earlier this year, killing some 60 dock workers, the Cuban people instantly believed that the Central Intelligence Agency of the U.S. government was responsible.

Hence, it is understandable why Premier Castro has announced that the new Cuba—if attacked—would defend itself from the beaches, on the streets, from the rooftops, and his people applauded heartily, the peasants clanking their machetes together overhead in an age-old symbol of solidarity against tyrants. Hence it is understandable why the new Cuba is raising an army of some 50,000 trained men and women, and reserves of several hundreds of thousands. The exigencies of their cause demand an armed people, a people trained to fight in all the latest ways of warfare. For defense; to safeguard the present, to guarantee the future.

XVI. THE HITLER WEAPON — ANTI-COMMUNISM

IMPERIALISM NEVER DARES admit truth—it cloaks its piracy with piety. In Africa it helps the “backward tribesmen achieve democratic self rule” and “saves” them from the fearful clutch of Communism. In Latin America—and Cuba—it contends that it has helped raise the living standards of the people and it “defends the hemisphere from Communism.”

Anti-Communism has been, and continues to be, a

primary weapon against revolutionary Cuba, as it has been, and continues to be, the primary weapon against all social and political advance in these 20th century decades. Hitler, Mussolini and Tojo fashioned it into its classic form when they banded together in the Anti-Comintern Pact—and then proceeded to attack the capitalist democracies. Castro, in one of the many enlightening lectures he delivers to his people over television, made this abundantly clear last July. Anti-Communism was the instrument, he said, “to destroy Republican Spain”; it was used “to destroy the Arbenz government of Guatemala in 1954”; it is the device “the counter-revolutionaries always use in this day and this age.” It is the big gun in the artillery of Cuba’s enemies.

When it became clear to all on Wall Street that Fidel Castro and his government could not be bought, the monopolists touched off their Big Berthas. To put all their lies under scrutiny is a considerable task; they continue to be manufactured en masse in one guise or another. And they can be traced to the sources encouraged by the State Department.

The nature of these lies can be judged by such columns as that of the night-club writer, Dorothy Kilgallen, in the Hearst newspapers. Back in July 15, 1959 she could write: “U.S. Intelligence is virtually non-existent if the Government isn’t aware that Russia already has bases in Havana. Russian pilots in uniform are strutting openly in Havana.”

More ominous than the nightmares of this night-club historian was the type of libel manufactured by former Assistant Secretary of State A. A. Berle (*The Reporter*, July 7, 1960): “For all practical purposes,” he says, “Cuba is just as much a Communist satellite as Hungary or North Korea. I mean that a few Communists, or men controlled by them, whose policies and tactics are directed either by Moscow or by Peking (probably the latter, though at this moment it is not certain), are in

control of Cuba's resources, its territory and its voiceless people. . . . The island republic has been converted not only into a spearhead of Soviet and Chinese propaganda but also a potential base for Soviet and Chinese power." Berle flatly declares that "the clique dominating Cuba 'intends' direct aggression" against the rest of Latin America "with Chinese and Soviet support."

Berle's exercise in the Big Lie continues, when he says, naming no sources, that "about \$150,000,000 has been spent" for (arms). . . ." Furthermore, it is possible that Castro's trade agreements with the Soviet Union involved arms packages from the Skoda works in Czechoslovakia, though the Czech government recently went out of its way to deny that report. . . . The United States and any Latin American countries that care to join (I believe most would do so) should be prepared to oppose by all necessary means any movements or governments that are manipulated overtly or covertly by forces outside the hemisphere. This is not a breach of the non-intervention principles. . . . What I am suggesting is not intervention, but defense."

It is salutary to consider the views of Samuel Shapiro, in the September 22, 1960 issue of the *New Republic*. Shapiro, certainly no pro-Communist, was a Fulbright professor in Argentina last year and now is Assistant Professor of History at Michigan State University. "I mean no disrespect to Mr. Berle or to the magazine, *The Reporter*," he writes, "when I point out that the above extracts have some self-evident errors." Shapiro asked some intelligently embarrassing questions.

What kind of a Communist satellite is it that has a \$75 million U.S. Naval Base located within its borders, and a multi-million dollar campaign designed to attract U.S. tourists?

The professor continued: "Communist satellites maintain a close watch over their frontiers and a strict surveillance over foreigners; I went to Cuba without a pass-

port (none is required for U.S. citizens), traveled all over the island freely, passed even inside military cantonments where I was courteously shown around by a polite captain in the Rebel Army, and engaged in long and heated political discussion with dozens of people on the steps of the Capitol of downtown Havana."

The educator dismissed Berle's statement that Peking "probably" controls the Cuban government, with the dry comment that the charge is made "without any factual support"; not even the *New York Times* correspondents, he said, "have made this contention."

Notice the looseness, Shapiro suggests, of Mr. Berle's phrase about the Skoda works. "It is possible (anything is possible)," Shapiro continues, quoting Berle, "that arms are to be sent, and the fact that the Czech government "went out of its way" to deny the report makes the charge even more likely. It may be, of course, that Skoda arms are being sent; I cannot say that they have not, but neither should we assume that this is the case." (And one may well ask why a sovereign state cannot buy arms—or anything else—from anybody she wishes. Wouldn't we?)

To Berle's contention that the USSR will get a Cuban "military base, air or naval," Shapiro continues, "As the USSR has rockets that can hit the moon, how likely is it that they would wish to imperil their chances to win over Latin America by trade, aid and propaganda for the sake of a few highly vulnerable bases in Cuba?"

Shapiro makes several more telling points, which include his estimate of the State Department's efforts to dragoon the Latin American states of the OAS (the Organization of American States) into action against Cuba at the Costa Rica conference last summer. It was "not very successful." The countries were glad that the conference resulted in breaking relations with the blood-stained Trujillo dictatorship in the Dominican Republic, "but *they were well aware that they had Castro*

to thank for this reversal of a 30-year-old policy."

Despite Secretary of State Christian Herter's efforts, Ignacio Luis Arcayo, Venezuela's foreign minister, warned against attempting to limit democratic liberties under the pretext of "fighting Communism." Even after the "final declaration was watered down," Shapiro concludes, Arcaya and Peru's Raul Porras refused to sign it and Mexico issued a "clarifying statement weakening it still further."

Much of the "positive effect" wore off instantly when Senator Ellender, of Louisiana, remarked that "he wished there was a Trujillo in every country in South and Central America." That statement made the front page headlines from Mexico City to Buenos Aires. The Administration's sudden offer at the Bogota conference in September to provide Latin America with \$600,000,000 was understood as a measure to prevent the revolution *a la Cuba* from spreading. The Latin Americans ironically called it "the Castro plan"; when Washington omitted Cuba from its "benefits," the bribery aspect of the matter became painfully clear to all.

It is perhaps too early to say that the device of anti-Communism is beginning to reap diminishing returns. But the pitcher has gone to the well very often and the proverb is clear enough. . . . Latin America has cause to know. And it is highly revealing to read the comment in the Brazilian press evoked by the pre-election anti-Cuban statements of Kennedy and Nixon. *Jornal do Brasil*, close to President-elect Janio Quadros, wrote that Senator Kennedy "in an attitude that surprised Latin American public opinion, which considered him a sort of a younger edition of Adlai Stevenson, declared himself disposed to give support of all types to counter-revolutionary groups that in the United States and other nations conspire against the revolutionary dictatorship of Castro."

The paper added, "Vice President Nixon, in censuring him, recommended for the United States a more dis-

creet attitude, like the one they had in relation to the Arbenz Government in Guatemala." The Brazilian paper added: "There's no worse example than the case of Guatemala, still alive in the memory of Latin America. Thus, Nixon's amendment was worse than Kennedy's sonnet."

So the effort to isolate Cuba, by charging that she is "subservient" to the Soviet Union and to People's China does not necessarily reap the propagandistic results such charges would a decade ago. Anybody at the United Nations Fifteenth General Assembly September 26 would realize that. When Castro spoke, the U.S. press had a Roman holiday defaming him, his "wooing" of the Negro people, his "garrulity," etc., but the delegates from the sixteen new African lands present, as well as those from the socialist lands—together representing about two billion human beings on this earth, are not eager readers of the *Chicago Tribune* or even of the *New York Times*. And they recognized the validity of the Cuban premier's speech which had the lethal edge of a dissecting knife in an operating room when he described the workings of Wall Street imperialism in his homeland.

The State Department issued a lengthy reply to Castro October 14. Efforts were made to prove black white, white black. The Platt Amendment, for example, which reduced Cuba to economic vassalage, and which usurped the right of a nation to conduct its own foreign affairs, was described as a salutary measure that assured economic stability!

Monopolies exploiting Cuban resources? United Fruit? American Telephone and Telegraph? Cuban Bond and Share? Perish the thought! The very idea that monopolies exist in the U.S.A. is "straight out of the mythology of Soviet communism," the statement says. "The Marxist idea of 'monopolies' applied to the United States is a hundred years out of date"! There is no such thing as General Motors or Ford, U.S. Steel, or Commonwealth Edison or—any number of corporations that own and control vir-

tually everything. Their money is in. So the "answers" went, flying in the face of reason.

A chief charge, of course, is that there is "a growing intervention in Cuban affairs by the Soviet Union and Communist China," which is "welcomed by the Government of Cuba." Furthermore, the Cuban government "claims to believe in democracy but "only the Communist Party is permitted to function." . . . The implication is clear, of course; the Cuban Revolution is Communist or "Communist-controlled."

Let us consider the allegation that the Cuban Revolution is Communist, or "Communist-controlled." To multitudes on other shores the term "Communism" has a different connotation from that which is customary here. Other peoples regard the term as signifying a contemporary political and economic philosophy whose adherents have no sulphurous smell about them, no cloven hoof, no forked tail.

The term connotes a government of workers, farmers and intellectuals, in a nation where the working people own and control the nation's wealth, its natural resources, its industry, and operate that wealth in a planned fashion for the benefit of all who work. The laws of economic life today decree that the working-class, the industrial workers, predominantly, are the principal stratum of such a society—most cohesive, most advanced, most militant—and their political party—generally the Communist Party—is the most clear-sighted champion of their interests.

XVII. WHAT THE REVOLUTION IS

HOW DOES CUBA stand in this respect? Perhaps a good authority on whether there is Communism in Cuba would be the Cuban Communists themselves. At least it is sensible to consider what they have to say.

I spoke to Blas Roca, the general secretary of the Communist Party, when I was in Cuba early in 1960. Blas Roca spoke of the Cuban Revolution in the following terms during the Eighth National Assembly of his party in Havana last August. "It is not possible in our National Assembly," he said, "to avoid dealing with the question of the character of the Cuban Revolution." Imperialists, the Cuban counter-revolutionary war criminals, "thieves and traitors-in-exile," he declared, agree on two matters. First, to use all criminal, dirty means to try to overthrow the revolution and the government headed by Fidel Castro, and second, to say "that the Cuban Revolution is Communist, as a justification and pretext for their criminal opposition to it."

A people has a right to choose its own destiny, and if they wanted to embark on a Communist course, nobody has the right to deny them. But those who cry "Communist!" about the Cuban Revolution, hope to trade on popular misconceptions about Communism, painstakingly propagated through the years by the spokesmen of imperialism. The fact is that Cuba's Revolution is not Communist; it is anti-imperialist, anti-feudal, agrarian and industrial. The fact that Communists supported it, aided it, fought in the mountains alongside Castro's troops, bled with them, does not make it a Communist revolution. There were early Communists who fought on the side of the North to defeat slavery—men like August Willich and Joseph Weydemeyer, a general in the Union Army—but that did not make the Civil War "Communist-inspired" or Abe Lincoln, a Communist. Communists fought to save Spain from Franco's fascism, but that did

not make Republican Spain Communist. Robert Thompson, American Communist leader got the Distinguished Service Cross and 15,000 American Communists fought Hitler, but nobody deems the American war effort Communist.

Communism is a body of principles, and the practice of those principles in a certain general fashion to achieve a classless society wherein everybody will get the means to satisfy their needs. Communists strive to carry out those principles to arrive at a classless society. The first stage of Communism is socialism, when workers are rewarded according to their output. The next stage is Communism, where production will be so great that everybody will be able to get what he needs, regardless of differences in abilities to produce the goods of life. Communist objectives are to free humanity from want, to enhance its stature, mentally, spiritually, so that all men, as the ancient dream has it, will truly be brothers. To achieve such a society is now the objective of over a billion human beings. They strive for it by organizing themselves into political parties around their basic class—the industrial working class, which, leagued with the farmers, constitutes the foundation of the new state. They do not permit, if at all possible, a political condition that can allow the former slave-owners, or feudalists, or capitalists to recapture power. Overwhelmingly, power is vested in the classes that constitute the majority—the men and women who work the factories and till the fields; in them, and in their allied collaborators, the anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist, intellectual groups. Industry belongs—no longer to individuals—but to the people as a whole and their state power that represents them.

The enemies of Cuba have enough political knowledge to realize that it was not a Communist revolution. But these counter-revolutionaries and the big business interests inspiring them dare not tell the people the truth—that they oppose the new Cuba because it is primarily

anti-imperialist, because it exercises *national sovereignty*, both in domestic as well as foreign policy, in its own way, not in the way others order it; that it seeks trade with *all* countries; that it has taken over the oil refineries; that it carries out a radical agrarian reform; that it eliminates racism; that it promotes cooperatives; that it has converted barracks into schools, that it is conquering illiteracy. And that it affords a shining example to all Latin America.

Cuba's enemies dare not oppose the popular reforms, publicly, for they hope to catch the ear of Cuba's people—so they cry "Communism!" hoping to frighten the masses of the Republic.

But some well-intentioned people, even friends of Cuba, show confusion on the score. They describe Cuba's economy as socialist, and also, have a wrong estimate of the status of the Communist Party.

Confusion may arise because Cuba's economy has a large public sector—i.e., big sections of nationalized industry, as well as the farmside being organized into cooperatives. That Cuba nationalized these vast sectors of its economy, most of which was foreign-owned, does not mean it is practicing socialism. It means primarily that the new government recognizes that large private interests, monopoly capital, are counter-revolutionary and seek to overthrow the new setup by industrial, political, sabotage and armed uprising or invasion.

To defend itself new Cuba was obliged to take title and manage these industries on the nation's behalf. James S. Allen says in the October issue of *Political Affairs*: "The growth of the public and cooperative sector in the Cuban economy, and the marked trend to state planning for national growth can be understood within the framework of the present stage, without confusing these measures with socialism."

These features, he points out, are not unique to Cuba, but are present in other anti-imperialist revolutions. It

is true that the level and the tempo of this development is higher in Cuba than elsewhere. Due to the unparalleled degree of worker and peasant unity in Cuba, which has leagued the middle-class and certain employer groups to them, the revolutionary movement can use state measures for the national good to change the old plantation economy drastically, better the people's lot, speed industrialization and the nation's general well-being.

"In Marxist terms," Allen says, "these may be considered measures of a state-capitalist type, with the important qualification that under the popular democratic regime such as now exists in Cuba, they play a revolutionary role, even a significant preparatory and transitional role in relation to the forthcoming stage of socialism."

It is no secret that the Cuban Communists—in light of their world view of economics and politics—believe that Cuba—now in the democratic stage of a revolution—will, in the future, go on to the next stage, socialism. But Cuba is *not* socialist today, and it is not dominated by Communists.

The Communists do have a special relationship to this revolution. I had the chance early January of 1959, a few days after victory to observe this. They had based their tactics and strategy upon mass struggle, mass action: Castro, on military uprising. Some writers, like Paul Sweezy and Leo Huberman, authors of *Cuba: Anatomy of a Revolution*, display flaws in their valuable work when they assess the role of the Cuban Communists. They would, have been much nearer reality if they saw what I saw: three Communists among the seventeen commandantes, the outstanding leaders of the rebel army, chosen by the rebel command and the troops, because of their service in battle.

I saw Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, editor-in-chief of the Communist paper *Hoy*, shortly after he returned from the Sierra Maestra, armed and bearded, an associate of the rebel command.

The Communists regarded Castro's forces, soon after

they landed in Oriente Province, December of 1956, as the military arm of the revolutionary array—and they supported them vigorously. Many went up into the mountains as volunteers to serve under Castro.

The Communists brought the truth of the Castro guerrillas to the trade unions, to the peasants, to the students and professionals. They mobilized the people to help the ragged rebels. From their underground cells came hundreds of thousands of leaflets, pamphlets, books, that reached millions.

Hence, it comes as something of a shock when Sweezy and Huberman pose their question: "Are the Communists getting in a position from which they can wrest leadership of the masses, of the revolutionary movement itself, out of the hands of Fidel and his colleagues in the army and the government."

The question serves Cuba's enemies. It predicates an assumption that the State Department tries to foster: that Communists have ulterior aims separate and apart from the interests of the people, and their workingclass from which they came. The fact is that the Revolution moves along the broad lines the Communists have advocated for a generation. The fact is that Castro has found Communist aid loyal and invaluable; it is in fullest coalition with him. The Communists are the staunchest protagonists of that national unity which is imperative for victory. As Blas Roca said at the 8th National Assembly of his party last summer, "As long as there is unity in the camp of the revolution, the revolution is indestructible."

That unity persists and it grows. Let nobody misinterpret the defection of individuals here and there as anything significant politically, aside from the fact that class interests operate, inevitably. Hence certain men, closely allied to the monopolies, or blinded by class prejudices engendered by the monopolies, drop out of the anti-imperialist coalition. This has happened in every revolution

from the time of Benedict Arnold. In a different, but associated sense, history has written of these things since the Scriptures: there was a man named Judas Iscariot.

XVIII. SMALL COUNTRY — BIG REVOLUTION

SO IN SUMMARY, we can say about the new Cuba that it is the highest level the democratic, anti-imperialist revolution has reached in America. Not only did it oust a blood-stained dictator, but it won a degree of national sovereignty, of independence, that is unparalleled in the history of Latin America. In addition, reforms were instituted that brought strength to the national economy: the grant of land to the peasantry is increasing the output and diversifying the crop; the turn toward industrialization has given the workers new vistas; the unity of worker and peasant is at high peak. National perspectives broaden toward the sunburst of socialism which all can see is inevitable here. The increasing nationalization of foreign industry and *latifundias*—big plantations—helps the progress toward socialization.

Men in high capitalist places may rant, and smear, and conspire but they cannot stay the course of history: socialism inevitably will come, as it already has to a third of the world. It is displacing capitalism, as capitalism displaced feudalism. For capitalism, in its latest phase—imperialism—is grotesquely outmoded, and cannot solve mankind's problems. A new system is needed; and what began in Europe and Asia is leaping to Africa and Latin America. Cuba is the first of the nations in this hemisphere to move in that direction. It is not socialist, but the preconditions toward a socialist solution are maturing fast.

Secondly, the new Cuba has caught the imagination, the loyalty of the vast majority in Latin America. The conditions of that continent resemble those of pre-revolutionary Cuba: poor, oppressed, nations subsisting off an agrarian economy in which latifundia—large land-holdings—predominate. Most of the countries, too, are in the clutches of the same great Wall Street corporations that dominated Cuba. The term “imperialismo Yanqui” is common to all; and what happened in one land was duplicated in others. For each suffer similarly the piracy of Wall Street. Unquestionably the basic reason for the State Department’s Latin American jitters is the fear that other lands south of the Rio will follow suit.

On this score, Marguerite Higgins, writing in the *New York Herald Tribune* (October 23, 1960), nervously quoted the Latin American diplomatic corps. That assembly of ambassadors told her that all but two nations on their continent are ready for “the Castro way.” And they abhorred the show of imperialist violence that the U.S. government was displaying.

More than that: Cuba was repudiating the argument of “geography” that was used for generations as the clincher against independence movements. How could a small nation oppose the nearby Colossus of the North? So the argument went. It was quixotic, suicidal; and it had its impact in certain circles. The Marines had been landing and taking “the situation in hand.” For so many years the battleships had steamed into ports to quell any show of resistance; economic measures were used to strangle any uppity ideas the Latin American have-not nations might develop. And along came Cuba. It was an historic development that inspired all who want freedom from dictators—be they political or economic. It revealed to them their own strength in this day and age. For this day and age is different from that of any other time—as Cubans told me early in January 1959. It is the time of the colonial revolution as well as that of the socialist.

As the economy of socialist Russia grows with unparalleled speed (nearly four times as fast as ours) and similarly in all other socialist lands, the formerly enslaved peoples are moving into freedom and making their will for independence and liberty felt throughout the world. That was especially evident in the Fifteenth Assembly of the United Nations. These two new forces act as a mighty deterrent against the marines landing and bossing the workers everywhere. That was seen in the UN when Castro's speech received a warm welcome from the Asian-African bloc—the biggest unit in the UN today.

So Cuba, in sum, its heroic experience, in sum, tells all Latin America that freedom, sovereignty, independence, and a bettered life for all its inhabitants, is within grasp. One needs but the will to challenge the old, the moribund, the dying slave-owning colonial system. That is what Cuba has said to the world and that is why Cuba today is the cause of all decent men the world over.

And that is why our government must be brought to realize that armed force and economic reprisals are only harming our national interests. The time demands new approaches based on respect for the sovereign rights of all other nations.

XIX. THINK, AMERICANS!

SO, WHEN I STOOD before the inquisitorial tribunal in the Senate Building I thought of the things which I have put down in these pages. I deem them enough to draw any honest writer, any self-respecting journalist, to a sympathy with the cause of the new Cuba. As a product of the American public school system, it was not so long ago that earnest teachers taught me the glories of the American Revolution, taught me to revere the memory of the Founding Fathers, who too, suffered calumny and worse when they sought independence and economic freedom from the tyrannical restraints of the British crown. I can never be untaught. Reverence remains forever for Washington and Jefferson and Franklin and Abraham Lincoln who said that the strongest bond between workingmen of the world is that of fraternal understanding and solidarity. It is too late to persuade me to repudiate that, even though the highest placed men of our Government would have an entire people reject the teachings of our own sages, our own patriots.

Respect for my native land, its hallowed traditions, yes, and consequently, respect for myself, demand that I speak out for the justice of other nation's causes. I know it is *our* cause, too; if they go down to defeat, we, the American people, suffer irrevocably too. I know, having seen no little of this world's life today, that these are not solely questions of personal and political ethics; the actual physical well-being, our very existence, as well as our moral principles lie in balance. Peace, or a war horrible beyond all imagination, is the final consequence of imperial rapine. And so, I went to Cuba twice this past year, Mr. Senator, yes, and wrote what I saw and said what I think. For I believe the destiny of all mankind is involved in such issues as freedom for Cuba—a small land, yes, but mother of a great Revolution that has the respect and admiration of a world.

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